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AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION
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Thank you Brian (Clymer) for that grand introduction.

APTA's professionalism and dedication is something I've long admired, and I'm delighted to have a chance to express those feelings to its members personally.

Moreover, if there's one hallmark of the Bush Administration, it has been our commitment to a sharing of authority and a pooling of intellectual as well as financial resources -- a partnership of equals between Washington and those outside the capital whose expertise has been tapped far less frequently than their tax dollars.

From his first day in office, President Bush has acted to give us an efficient, well planned national transportation system that includes mass transit as a primary player.

The tremendous progress we've made couldn't have been accomplished without the support of you in APTA. Let's look at where we were, where we are today and where we are going.

In 1990, we announced the National Transportation Policy. Looking back, I was at the White House as Deputy Chief of Staff when the policy development began. But I remember that many of you in the transit industry were so shell-shocked from the debates of earlier years that you were in no mood to see why the National Transportation Policy was the fresh statement of a new beginning. But it was. It forged a link.

The outlines had been sketched out by the serious work conducted during APTA's own Transit 2000 exercise, and Project 2020 of AASHTO.

Taken together, the three statements became the fundamental groundwork from which we all collaborated to pass the revolutionary legislation we call "ISTEA."

In 1990, we also introduced cross-border leasing, and a year later issued new leasing provisions. Cross border leasing enabled transit authorities in California, New Jersey, and Missouri to generate major savings in the cost of rolling stock.

In 1991, President Bush signed the ISTEA, putting mass transit on as firm a footing as it's had in this country in over 75 years. That doesn't mean things are going to be easy from here on out. They're going to be tough.

You're going to have to fight hard for what you need. Know your rights. Know your projects, and build your arguments.

But the Bush Administration gave you a level playing field -- changed the rules of the game forever -- to acknowledge that transit can be fuel efficient. It also can help the environment and relieve congestion. Transit is an equal player.

In 1992, we've provided the "advance drawdown" of federal share and "like kind exchange" policies.

We also moved \$261 million in FY 92 to transit projects from money previously labeled "highway." Flexible fund transit projects are already under way in communities as varied as Burlington, Vermont, Boston, Omaha, Nebraska, and New York City. Flexible funding directly targets traffic congestion and air pollution, but it also reflects a completely new way of doing business.

In FY 93, we anticipate at least \$600 million in flexible funding will be moved to transit projects from previously regarded "highway" money.

In short, we've given states unprecedented flexibility to create an intermodal transportation system, and we've mandated not only that they plan but also that they involve you -- at the local level -- in the planning process.

You now have the ability to sit down with state and local officials and make long-term capital investment plans that are truly intermodal in nature, and you also have an intermodal federal resource to turn those plans into reality.

Despite the flexibility brought you by ISTEA and the Administration, there has been total lack of flexibility in the discretionary program from Congress.

One hundred percent of the discretionary transit funds for new starts and bus projects in the 1993 DOT Appropriations Act are earmarked by Congress for special projects. This poses a serious threat to our ability together to manage an effective transit program.

As a matter of simple logic, we put ourselves -- not to mention the Federal Transit Assistance Program -- at considerable risk if we regard project-by-project Congressional earmarking as a sound way of doing business. It isn't.

We must find a way to rid ourselves of earmarking. Transit 2000, Project 2020, and the NTP all talked about much better alternatives.

No longer is this an issue of transit versus highways -- one winner and one loser -- who gets whose hands into whose pocket, so to speak.

We no longer have to see things in a context of winners and losers. We can see it in a perspective of local officials having the responsibility to use federal resources flexibly. And then be held accountable for the decisions they make. Admittedly, this brings with it a new burden because you now have to convince local officials that you have the better mousetrap.

But those of you who will be the most successful transit managers of the 1990's, are the ones who are ready to adopt new ways. The Federal Transit Assistance program will be able to deliver the most help to those who know how the program has changed and understand where its new potential lies.

Not only will your programs and projects have to be judged on their own merits, they will also have to be judged competitively.

And be found to be in the community's best interest. But the nice thing about ISTEA is that your community makes the call.

Nobody's going to wind up with a new freeway anymore just because there's highway money available and nothing else to spend it on. By the same token, no transit investment ought to be made in any community unless the community is convinced it's the best use of resources.

Now, as many of you know, I've spent the last month and a half in South Florida as the President's representative in the Hurricane Andrew relief effort. Let me thank you on behalf of the President for mass transit's contribution to the relief and movement toward restoration of normal life in South Florida.

Few people realize the true value of mass transit until disaster strikes.

In San Francisco after the earthquake BART was up and running in 24 hours and proved mass transit's worth. And mass transit came to the rescue in South Dade County. The people were instantly thrown into a situation of near total immobility. When 100,000 cars are destroyed and people have no way to move to relief stations, health services or shelters, mass transit becomes the salvation.

In South Dade County it was easy to see that basic transportation was not only in a shambles, but pre-storm patterns of travel were totally unrelated to post-storm travel needs.

Let me put it in more practical terms: The best M.A.S.H. unit in the world for emergency medical assistance does no good if the people the unit has to serve all live in a temporary tent city on the opposite side of a snake and alligator infested swamp.

It does no good to have emergency centers for FEMA workers to receive assistance applications, if people can't get to the centers to file their applications.

Or, there was no benefit in moving in with a relative up North in Broward County, if you couldn't travel back and forth to what had once been your home to meet with the insurance adjuster, or return to your job.

One of the first things I did after I arrived was call Brian Clymer and our great team at FTA. What followed is a tribute not just to the FTA, but to mass transportation itself.

Working out of an old airplane hanger at Miami International Airport, we helped local transportation people put together an emergency mass transit network. Because it was an emergency, we were able to influence land use decisions. We put the chow tent near the bus route, in other words.

And we made sure the people could get from the tent city to the M.A.S.H. unit. And we even did something about those people who had an opportunity to stay with relatives up in Broward County.

We went to FEMA with a hand-written application and got an on-the-spot commitment for \$45 million to run the newly designed system for the next six months.

Metro Dade beefed up its service on some regular North-South trunk lines. Jitneys -- operating under contract to Metro Dade -- have been established to link the trunk line service with the various tent cities, shelters, M.A.S.H. units and relief centers. The best news is it's all working.

And the point is this: the Bush Administration doesn't need an earthquake or a hurricane to teach us the value of mass transit. We appreciate you and what you represent for the future.

You are in the driver's seat for a changing industry. There will be no single fork in the road, only a continuing series of choices.

I look forward to sharing the journey with you, and to smoothing the process that leads to better, safer transportation. You have a willing partner in an orderly, well planned business venture that puts people first. We share a single-minded purpose: moving people safely, economically and efficiently into the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

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