

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW CARD
RAIL STRIKE REMARKS
WASHINGTON, D.C. JUNE 25, 1992

I have talked with the President several times and he is very well aware of the ramifications that this strike will have on this nation's economy. He and I agree that it is now the responsibility -- and only the responsibility -- of the Congress to act. They alone can solve it.

Wednesday, in my testimony to Congress I discussed how this strike or work stoppage will affect the nation -- how commuters, factory workers and farmers will all be hurt by the shut down of our essential railway system. The rail system, as you know, is a vital and integral part of our intermodal transportation network -- and a rail stoppage drags down all transportation. That's all the more reason for Congress to step up to the plate.

It's imperative that Congress act. It's time that they acted with finality to resolve this labor-management dispute that's been going on since 1988. It's time that both rail labor and rail management bring this prolonged and painful process to an end.

I will, of course, continue to undertake discussions with labor and management, and with the leadership on both sides of the aisle and in both house of Congress to try to get this situation resolved.

The good news is that there were all night discussions with members from both parties in the House and Senate on legislation to bring this strike to an end. We are optimistic that the House will soon be ready to act on a measure to get the trains running again.

But the House alone doesn't speak for Congress -- the Senate will also have to act and they need to do so quickly. Already, some of our automotive and chemical plants are slowing down production and thinking of laying people off. Already, there are growing stockpiles of agricultural products beginning to rot. Already, we are experiencing a number of backlogs in many of our major ports. And already, we are beginning to see more commuters -- especially those relying on Amtrak services -- affected by the strike.

All of these developments will have a serious impact on our economy if the strike is allowed to continue another 24 hours. And while -- as truckers -- you have been besieged with pleas from worried shippers to take your goods, I'm sure we would all agree that in the long run no one benefits from this crisis. Everyone throughout the transportation industry ultimately loses. So Congress had better act, and it had better act before midnight tonight in order to keep the economy moving.