



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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A two-year Department of Transportation study, sent to Congress today, recommends changes in barge shipping laws to allow more flexibility in dry bulk commodity movement along inland waterways.

Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar said that unless Congress takes action, barge transportation costs will probably increase at the end of this year.

"This would be contrary to President Nixon's emphatic desire to have our transportation system provide the best service at the least cost," the Secretary asserted.

The report concludes that increased costs for transportation of commodities such as grain for export and coal for electric generators will go up unless the Interstate Commerce Act of 1940 is amended to continue flexibility in barge line operations to meet rapidly changing supply and demand conditions.

Specifically, the study recommends:

- \* REPEAL of the rule that prohibits the mixing of barge loads of dry bulk exempt commodities (such as grain and coal) with regulated commodities (such as iron pipe and paper) in the same tow.

- \* REPEAL of the restriction that prohibits more than three types of exempted bargeloads of commodities from being in tows which can contain up to 40 barges.

- \* CONTINUATION of the provision that defines which commodities are exempt from regulation.

- \* CONTINUATION of unpublished rates.

The study, mandated by Congress in December 1970, contains the first tabulation of rates charged for barge movements of exempt dry bulk commodities over the Mississippi River System and Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

"Variations in these rates have a direct effect on providing flexible transportation services for shippers of agricultural and mineral commodities," the Secretary added.

Copies of the report may be obtained from:

Office of Policy, Plans and International Affairs (TPI-34)  
Department of Transportation  
400 7th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590

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