

OPENING STATEMENT OF

MORTIMER L. DOWNEY

NOMINEE TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

OF THE

UNITED STATES SENATE

May 17, 1993

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I appreciate your timely response in scheduling this hearing on my nomination to the position of Deputy Secretary of Transportation. I see this position as an enormous challenge but at the same time a great opportunity. It is a challenge in the sense that the safety of millions of Americans rests on the shoulders of the Department of Transportation, as does the responsibility for the movement of goods and people that makes our economy strong. It is an opportunity because I expect, if confirmed, to be part of a team that will work with the Congress, with industry and with State and local governments to improve the Department's functioning and its contribution to the well being of our country.

Moving into the Transportation Department at this time is a very exciting prospect. The issues it faces are important ones, and the time is right to build on the Department's strengths and make changes where change will enhance its contributions. The President has given the general directions for that change and the Secretary of Transportation has set forth a specific agenda that will require all of our skills and attention. As it must, the agenda begins with safety in all of its facets, from the regulation of the automobile to the effective operation of the air traffic system to the protection of the public from such concerns as hazardous material spills. Issues of economic importance such as the health and competitiveness of our airline industry and our maritime industries are high priority matters.

We recognize the significance of Transportation's activities and programs on the nation's economy at a time when jobs and economic growth are of paramount importance. To this end, I expect to work with the Department's agencies to move their work quickly and effectively to contribute towards long term economic growth. The Department's activities can also generate real opportunities to apply the capabilities of our defense industries towards civilian needs. Making this a reality will take new partnerships and innovative thought as to the role of technology in such areas as high speed ground transportation.

At the same time, we must be sensitive to our stewardship of natural resources and the environment. The far reaching provisions of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and the Clean Air Act Amendments can form the basis of a new model of responsible transportation development in partnership with State and local government.

Finally, two major themes of this Administration will affect everything we hope to do at Transportation. The clear call from the President and the Vice President to "reinvent government" and to use the skills and knowledge of government's employees to generate the ideas behind "reinvention" creates real

opportunities to think through what the Department does, why it is done and how the missions can be retooled to meet the expectations of those we serve. Concurrently, the most important issue for all of us has to be people. Everything we do at Transportation relates to people and their needs. We must be sensitive to diversity, both in our workforce and in the opportunities our activities create, and we must be always aware that the real purpose of all these activities is service to the public, not in an aggregate sense but in terms of individuals who must accomplish their daily tasks'.

I believe that my background and my education have prepared me well for addressing these challenges. I will soon complete my thirty-fifth year in transportation work, with most of those years spent in the management levels of complex multi-modal transportation agencies. Most of my experience has been at the local level in agencies that deal directly with the travelling public, and in these agencies I have had the challenge of dealing with federal programs and regulations. At another time in my career, I served in Washington, first on Capitol Hill and then in the Executive Branch, and have first hand knowledge of how policies are developed and implemented at the national level.

I look forward to working with this Committee and with the Congress on the issues that face transportation and I am optimistic that we can make progress in these important areas through a cooperative effort. I would be glad to answer any questions that the Committee has at this time.

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**DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
MORTIMER DOWNEY
1993 SPEECH LIST**

05/13/93 Americans For Indian Opportunity
Washington, D.C.

07/14/93 Intermodal Conference
New York, New York

07/26/93 National Transportation Center
Baltimore, Maryland

09/13/93 Airport Council International and American
Association of Airport Executives
Washington, D.C.

09/15/93 Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce
Washington, D.C.

09/20/93 American Consulting Engineers
Council Transportation Committee
Washington, D.C.

09/22/93 The Women's Transportation Seminar
Washington, D.C.

09/22/93 Greater Canton Chamber of Commerce
Washington, D.C.

09/28/93 Bond Financing And Transportation
Infrastructure Symposium

10/01/93 Coast Guard Commissioning
Washington, D.C.

10/02/93 New York State Bar Association
Environmental Law Section
Corning, New York

10/06/93 American Public Transit Association
New Orleans, Louisiana

10/08/93 1993 DOT Combined Federal Campaign Rally
Washington, D.C.

10/11/93 American Short Line Railroad Association
Orlando, Florida

10/14/93 Baltimore Women's Transportation Seminar
Baltimore, Maryland

10/15/93 Associated General Contractors --
Highway Division
Washington, D.C.

10/20/93 Transportation Reform Alliance
Washington, D.C.

10/26/93 Aviation Security 1993 International
Conference "Civil Aviation Security
In The Global Economy"
Washington, D.C.

10/27/93 Transport Workers Union of America
Las Vegas, Nevada

11/04/93 The Urban Land Institute
Boston, Massachusetts

11/17/93 Society Of American Military Engineers
New York, New York

12/02/93 Engineering News Record Intelligent
Highway Conference
McLean, Virginia

12/06/93 Talking Points -- Public-Private
Partnership Seminar
Washington, D.C.

12/11/93 Green Line Metro Station Opening
Greenbelt, Maryland

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DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION MORT DOWNEY
AMERICANS FOR INDIAN OPPORTUNITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MAY 13, 1993

Thank you for that generous introduction.

Secretary Peña wanted to be with you today but he had to be in California to participate in the President's Defense Conversion Initiative. The Clinton Administration is moving ahead as fast as we can to recast our vast defense technology base into commercial uses to create jobs and make our economy stronger. It turns out that a large number of those civilian uses will make transportation better.

And I'm particularly delighted that the Secretary's work on this important objective gives me an opportunity to meet with this very special group of young leaders.

Let me say at the outset congratulations to LaDonna Harris and the Americans for Indian Opportunity for sponsoring this Ambassadors Program. You have created an important opportunity for national leaders to bring the federal government closer to the people we serve. Although you as Native American leaders and I as a federal official have completely different roles, our missions are the same. We both want to get things done for the people we serve. I hope at the end of my brief remarks we can have a dialogue on how we might work together to bring better transportation service to America and especially to its Indian communities.

That requires leadership, which is the subject of your conference.

You may wonder how much leadership is needed from a deputy secretary -- the Number 2 man -- and in fact, some of you may wonder what a deputy secretary does when he's not filling in for the Secretary. In a sense, I will be the Chief Operating Officer of the department, responsible for the day to day operations of a sprawling organization with a \$40 billion budget and nearly 110,000 employees who are really on the move. The Coast Guard saves a life every 90 minutes, the Federal Aviation Administration air traffic control work force guides more than 170,000 takeoff and landing operations a day. And the people who run our highway safety programs save nearly 20,000 lives a year -- that's 52 lives every single day. In addition, we set national policy direction for every form of transportation. We even have a bicycle policy.

So you can see that my job lends new meaning to the word leadership. But my definition of leadership is very simple. Leadership is how to get things done, how to work with people. People are our most valuable asset at the Department of Transportation. Leadership involves motivating them, building relationships, and developing a common understanding -- a system of rewards and recognition.

In an organization as broad as ours, work force diversity becomes not only an asset but a necessity. It just makes sense that the more diverse cultures you have making the decisions on the kinds and places for transportation initiatives, the better your product -- which, in our case is service. That's precisely the reason Secretary Peña has made work force diversity a top priority. Just as the President appointed a cabinet

that "looks like America" so do we intend to make the face of DOT a multi-cultural face.

On this we need your help. We are just beginning a series of programs to achieve work force diversity. There will be active recruiting, internships, and working with colleges and universities to have more transportation-oriented curricula and therefore encourage more young people to select transportation careers. In a word, we should have Native American highway engineers, Native American air traffic controllers and Native American railroad safety inspectors. But we have to find them first. I hope you will make it one of your priorities to find candidates for good transportation careers, screen them for us and send us the best names.

Having said all that, the people who work at DOT

are only part of the human equation that makes the best, most efficient transportation system in the world. That system serves people.

In a little more than three months the Clinton Administration has begun its efforts to change the national mind set about transportation. No longer can we as a nation afford to think of transportation only in terms of the bricks and mortar in train stations, or the concrete and asphalt ribbons that criss-cross our nation, weaving a giant web across the map.

Transportation is the most human product on the market today. It's a collection of people moving to work, school and the grocery store. Transportation is how people get to social services, how the elderly get to the doctor's office, how the acutely ill get to specialized facilities several hundred miles away. It's

also how the kaleidoscope of products people use in their daily lives get to the store shelves.

Transportation can be scenic byways and bicycle paths as well as Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems, mass transit and giant airport complexes. But at the same time transportation can be a subtle instrument that protects our wetlands, cleans our air and leaves the environment and our world a better place.

We've already made decisions on major initiatives in four areas: one, to take all reasonable steps to restore the vitality of the U.S. aviation industry; two, to forge a new maritime policy that will revitalize our merchant marine and maintain a U.S. shipbuilding capacity; three, to create a national high speed rail policy that will do for the 21st century what the Interstate Highways did for this century; and four, to

administer on surface infrastructure program to provide flexibility to serve people. Each decision we've made has been after we have answered the questions: Is it the best choice for serving the people? Will it improve the environment and leave the world a better place?

We can achieve this goal if you in this room get into the equation. I am inviting you to be our partners in an exciting journey into the future. I came to Washington because I share President Clinton's vision of America. The President wants to rekindle the values that are so much a part of your heritage -- a sense of community.

So your challenge is to join our partnership. Begin by soaking up every bit of knowledge you can about the federal government, understand transportation programs as they apply to you. Get involved in these

programs. Be our Ambassadors to your Community.

Tell us how we can make these programs work better for the people who are nearest you and in the long run, you will be making a tremendous contribution to America. What I'm asking won't be an easy task. But you have a government that is ready to serve its people. And with your help, we can change the world for our neighbors and for future generations.

Thank you very much.

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