REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION MORTIMER DOWNEY
CELEBRATION OF SCENIC BYWAYS DESIGNATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C.
NOVEMBER 13, 1996

(Introduction to be made by FHWA Administrator Rodney Slater)

Thank you, Rodney, for that introduction -- and for your work on behalf of the effort to protect our national heritage. I also want to thank Gene Johnson for welcoming us this morning, and for his oversight within the FHWA of the National Scenic Byways Program.

[I'm also glad to see Congressman _____ here with us today, and look forward to his support in sustaining our commitment to scenic byways.]

Finally, I want to thank you -- the members of the Scenic Byway Coalition -- the members of our review and advisory committees -- and our federal agency partners for your commitment to this initiative. You've helped us to make this dream a reality.

In September Secretary Peña announced the first round of All-American Roads and National Scenic Byways designations -- 20 highways in 15 states from Connecticut to California.

In doing so, the Secretary supported President Clinton's commitment to protecting our environment while supporting economic prosperity -- a commitment I know you all share.

These 20 beautiful roads -- half of which are on federal lands -- are outstanding examples of the rich scenic, historic, and recreational qualities possessed by highways across our nation.

Over the past six weeks I've participated in events at three of them -- the Merritt Parkway in Connecticut, the Seaway Trail in New York, and the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina.

These roads, like the others designated through this program, fulfill the promise that getting there *can* be half the fun. Some of them, such as the Blue Ridge Parkway and the other All-American Roads, are destinations in themselves.

Preserving these highways is one part of this program. But we don't just look to the past -- these roads are also part of our future.

This program also supports the growth of tourism and recreation, which are so important in many of the areas these roads traverse. The activity they'll generate is going to produce good jobs and sustainable economic development around the country.

That's something the communities through which these roads pass understand, because all of these byways were nominated by communities, Indian tribes, and states, as well as by federal agencies.

The many federal agencies that are part of their communities, such as the National Park Service -- the Forest Service -- the Bureau of Indian Affairs -- and the Bureau of Land Management, also recognize the importance of our designations of these cherished assets. They deserve our recognition and our thanks for their leadership in this program.

This year's initial round of designations is only the beginning of a continuing national effort to safeguard and cherish an important part of America's unique heritage.

We're now accepting nominations for the second round of these designations, and we're looking forward to your support over the next five months as decisions are made about which roads to nominate.

There is something else in which we need your support next year.

You all know that the National Scenic Byways Program, as well as the Federal Lands Highway Program, was made possible by ISTEA -- the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act -- which expires next year.

We need to work towards ISTEA's reenactment in a way that preserves the values that ISTEA has recognized.

I'd like to close my remarks now by again congratulating you all on a great achievement.

Let's continue working together, moving forward with the additional rounds of scenic byways designations and with reauthorizing a surface transportation program which enables us to protect our nation's legacy into the 21st century.

Let's continue the effort to protect some of the most stunning vistas and picturesque roadways in America so that our children and grandchildren can share the same sense of pride and wonder we had as children -- and that we still have today. Thank you.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION MORTIMER DOWNEY
HARVARD-COMPETITIVENESS POLICY COUNCIL CONFERENCE:
"EVALUATING THE CLINTON-GORE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES"
WASHINGTON, D.C.
NOVEMBER 19, 1996

(Introduction to be made by panel chair William Wulf of the National Academy of Engineering; other panelists include Brian Kahin of Harvard University and Tom Kalil of the National Economic Council)

Thank you, Bill, for that introduction. I'm happy to join you -- Tom Kalil -- and Brian Kahin to talk about how we're applying technology to build infrastructure for the 21st century.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to bring you greetings from Secretary Peña. As you know, the Secretary won't be serving a second term, and will be leaving office next January 20. He's been a great friend of technology, reshaping our programs and increasing funding. We'll miss his leadership.

You've heard this morning how technology is being used elsewhere, but we face special challenges in transportation. We rely on our transportation system for the safe, efficient movement of people -- products -- and, increasingly, information.

Our dependence on that system is growing even as it faces demanding challenges: expanded travel -- inadequate capacity -- bottlenecks and poor connections between different forms of transportation -- and aging and deteriorating infrastructure.

A generation ago the solution was simple: build lots of new roads and bridges, as we did with the Interstate Highway System.

But today new roads can cost $40 million a mile, and giving just the 50 largest cities the incremental capacity they need over the next two decades could cost $150 billion.

This comes at a time when we're not investing enough to maintain the performance of our existing systems.

The high cost of construction and limits on public resources -- together with concerns about our environment -- mean that construction can no longer can be our only choice.

Instead, we're looking to technology-based strategies to improve mobility at a cost that's affordable -- economically *and* environmentally.

These include everything from new materials for longer-lasting bridges and pavement to the Advanced Technology Transit Bus and the Partnership for a New Generation Vehicle.

We're limited in what we can cover today, so I'd like to focus on just one of our initiatives: the use of information and communications technologies to create what we call Intelligent Transportation Systems, or ITS.

These technologies allow us to better manage transport systems -- to increase their effective capacity -- to improve their safety and efficiency -- and to empower travelers by giving them the information they need to make good choices.

One inspiration for this effort comes from our aviation system. Although only one major airport has been built in the past generation, the number of planes using our air system has doubled.

That became possible because we learned how to better manage air space -- to provide continuous traffic and weather information to pilots -- and to safely reduce distances between planes -- things we've done by applying the advanced technologies to air traffic control.

One of the major technical and managerial challenges we've faced -- and will continue to face in the coming years -- is how to keep these technologies current.

Obviously, we're not developing technologies for their own sake, but in order to keep up with the demand for greater efficiency. Doing so in an era of funding constraints will be difficult.

That's why our ITS program is so important. ITS will do much the same thing for surface transportation that air traffic control technologies done for aviation.

It uses information and communications technologies to enable the parts of our transportation system to "talk" to each other and to respond to real-time conditions.

For example, these systems give commuters real-time updates on travel conditions, enabling them to avoid congestion by using alternative ways to get to work.

"Smart" traffic signals and freeway ramp meters that sense traffic volumes will automatically adjust signal patterns and timing to optimize traffic flow.

Interactive video systems installed at bus stop kiosks help tourists and others unfamiliar with a transit service to plan trips and give all riders real-time information on when the next bus will arrive.

And satellite-based tracking systems enable businesses to monitor their shipments enroute, making "just-in-time" delivery systems more productive.

That's going to be increasingly critical to our global economic competitiveness. Together with a highly-educated work force, a major part of our competitive advantage today comes from our ability to move products quickly and cheaply.

The price we'd pay for losing that advantage is clear: shipping delays cost Indian exporters 30 percent of their cost advantage over their western competitors.

As India and our other trading partners invest in their infrastructure, they'll begin to erode the advantage our own system has given us. That's why moving forward with ITS is in the national interest.

The ITS programs I described -- like others around the country -- are being deployed and operated by state and local governments and the private sector.

However, there's a vital role for the federal government, especially in these early stages. We need to retool the programs and institutions that provided the Interstate Highway System -- a simple task by comparison -- into the institutions that can provide this technology on a consistent, interoperable, nationwide basis.

We're helping to coordinate the setting of standards so that these systems can communicate and interact with each other and can improve their performance as technology improves.

These standards will operate within a national architecture, defined by consensus of the public and private stakeholders with federal guidance.

We're providing academic and private researchers with seed money for development of new concept, services, and technologies.

And we're funding actual deployment by making ITS eligible for our existing federal-aid programs.

We're already seeing progress. Today, the first generation of ITS technology is proving every day that it can make a real difference in people's lives.

Three of every five traffic backups are caused by crashes and breakdowns, and incident management systems can quickly clear them.

A computer in San Antonio's TransGuide system can identify an incident and, within seconds, choose the most effective solution from one of more than 34,000 pre-programmed strategies to divert traffic flow and clear the incident.

Emergency vehicles throughout the country are equipped with automatic locators to speed dispatching to crashes. Minneapolis has reduced response times to accidents by 20 minutes, and that contributes to saving lives.

And highway toll systems are being designed, or retrofitted, with electronic collection to speed traffic flows.

In Oklahoma, that's already cut the cost of a toll lane's operation by 90 percent, and is making this a viable way to help pay for road improvements.

And transit management systems in Baltimore, including automatic vehicle locators, have already increased transit productivity by 23 percent.

All told, we've provided nearly a billion dollars for development and deployment over the past several years, for efforts focused over several major areas.

The first is the creation within a decade of a national Intelligent Transportation Infrastructure.

This infrastructure includes things which already exist, such as traffic signals, transit management systems, and freeway incident services. It focuses on their replacement or upgrade on a rolling basis to the technologies that fit within the ITS infrastructure.

The infrastructure will service both highways and transit, with the goal of improving travel for people -- not just cars.

Ultimately, we want to see these upgraded into a fully-integrated electronic infrastructure that can produce real, measurable benefits -- much as linking computers to networks and the Internet has enhanced the benefits they produce.

We're going to measure those benefits by setting a goal of cutting travel times by 15 percent in our 75 largest metropolitan areas. That's going to save the average resident in those areas an average of a week a year in commuting time.

Every one of the technologies that will form the core of this electronic infrastructure already exists, although no city has the full set that will be needed for a truly integrated system.

This initiative will enable them to acquire and deploy the technologies they need.

The deployments of model ITS programs that the Secretary announced last month for Phoenix, San Antonio, Seattle, and the New York metropolitan area are just one example of how we're creating an electronic infrastructure for our highways and transit systems.

This electronic infrastructure won't just save taxpayers time: it'll save them money by creating two-thirds of the effective new travel capacity needed over the next decade -- at less than a quarter of the cost of new road construction to achieve comparable results.

Talking about the Intelligent Transportation Infrastructure brings to mind the President's National Information Infrastructure, which Tom Kalil spoke about.

The Telecommunications Act is going to help build not only the National Information Infrastructure but also support ITS deployment.

The competition and limited government regulation it makes possible will bring in new, service-oriented players, such as cable television companies and Internet access providers, to offer ITS services.

The Act also is going to stimulate investment in fiber optic and wireless deployment, which will help to provide the bandwidth -- the capacity for the transmission of information -- that ITS requires.

In short, the Telecommunications Act is providing the foundation to put ITS services in place faster -- cheaper -- and with even greater focus on the consumer.

The consumer, in fact, is the focus of Intelligent Transportation Systems.

That's why we also have initiatives to enhance trucking and other commercial vehicle operations.

Data on such matters as vehicle weight, taxes, safety, and driver credentials can be recorded and transmitted electronically.

That will reduce clearance delays at statelines and other checkpoints and will link to the systems freight shippers and carriers are using to manage their logistical flows.

These commercial vehicles also will operate more efficiently because such productivity improvements as mobile communication and navigation and tracking systems will be linked via the Global Positioning Satellites that the Departments of Defense and Transportation manage for military and civilian use.

We're also developing ITS programs that will enable rural areas to provide tourists with information on traffic, hotels, and points of interest and to precisely track and deploy services such as snow plowing.

In the future we'll see continued progress. Over the next decade we'll see full deployment of the Intelligent Transportation Infrastructure and our commercial vehicle and rural initiatives.

Research has already begun on the next generation of traffic management systems and on important safety initiatives such as crash avoidance systems -- using sensors developed for military use -- that could prevent a million crashes annually. That's going to produce substantial savings in lives, injuries, and medical care costs.

In the long run, safety will be a prime target for ITS deployment -- prevention of crashes through better information-driven assets, and conflict resolution, as well as the enhanced ability to respond to crashes with automated 911 notifications and emergency vehicle dispatch services.

And by the middle of the next century we could see the ultimate in ITS: widespread deployment of automated highway systems.

In fact, by next year we plan to open the first automated highway test track in a freeway median in California.

Most of the federal government's role in these efforts has been made possible by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, which we call ISTEA for short.

ISTEA authorized federal highway, transit, and safety programs, and raised federal transportation investment to the highest levels ever.

At the same time, it changed the focus of that investment from new construction to maintaining the current transport system -- to integrating its components -- and to increasing its efficiency through better management.

That's a pretty good description of what Intelligent Transportation Systems are meant to do, and ISTEA established the federal commitment to ITS, including funding -- a research agenda -- and pilot programs.

ISTEA expires next year, and we're looking forward to its reauthorization continuing a strong federal role in ITS -- and to providing the funding necessary to carry out that role.

We're looking forward to making both our metropolitan and our rural areas part of a network of ITS services that will benefit tourists -- give usable information and options to commuters -- and help to end gridlock.

We're looking forward to deploying ITS on the recently-designated 160,000-mile National Highway System, which carries 68 percent of commercial traffic and 42 percent of total national highway traffic on just 4 percent of our highway mileage.

If the users of the NHS have accurate, real-time information on traffic conditions, construction, and other factors, it will have significant economic benefits at a national scale.

We're looking forward to making travel seamless and borders transparent, not only within the U.S. but with our NAFTA partners as well, using electronic clearances to end costly stops and delays.

And we look forward to working with Congress -- with our state and local partners -- and with the private sector to developing the institutions and the partnerships that will realize the potential of Intelligent Transportation Systems. Thank you.

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