



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

226681
M-456

D 9011 001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 6, 1994

DOT 142-94
Contact: Bill Mosley
Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT RELEASES MONTHLY AIR
TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT

The Department of Transportation today issued its monthly Air Travel Consumer Report containing data on airline on-time performance, mishandled baggage and consumer complaints for August.

The 10 largest U.S. airlines posted an on-time arrival rate of 83.8 percent in August, an improvement over July's 79.5 percent but not as good as the 84.1 percent recorded in August of 1993. In recording the data, delays caused by mechanical problems are not counted, but will be starting next year.

The airlines reported a mishandled baggage rate of 4.85 complaints per 1,000 passengers, better than both July's 5.16 rate and August 1993's 5.09.

Consumers registered 808 complaints about airline service in August, well above July's total of 517 and 37 percent higher than the 589 total of August 1993.

Consumers may file their complaints with the Office of Consumer Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation, I-25, 400 7th St., S.W., Room 10405, Washington, D.C. 20590.

The department reminded consumers who want on-time performance data for specific flights to call their airline ticket offices or their travel agents. This information is available on the computerized reservation systems used by these agents.

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U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
October 7, 1994

DOT 143-94
Contact: Ed O'Hara
Tel.: (202) 366-5571

NEW TECHNOLOGIES WILL CHANGE THE WAY WE TRAVEL, PEÑA SAYS

New transportation technologies will transform the way Americans live and travel, Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña said today as he officially opened a three-day fair on the Washington Mall displaying the best in advanced technologies.

The 100 exhibits at "TransFuture '94 -- Transportation into the Next Century," include smart cars that can guide drivers to their destination and call for help in case of a collision, lifeboats that can right themselves in perilous seas, buses that emit no fumes, and advances that will speed shipments, raise productivity, prevent accidents and save lives.

Secretary Peña said new technologies are "the seeds that will grow into whole new American industries, employing American workers" and producing goods and services for home and global markets. Peña said they will also help combat the problems of traffic congestion and air pollution, create new jobs and make transportation more convenient and safer.

"We need to forge a true partnership between America's government, private industry and our public and private transportation research laboratories," he said.

Secretary Peña said the Department of Transportation is taking the lead in fostering new technologies "all the way from conception and research to operational testing, deployment and commercialization." DOT has made key personnel and structural changes in order to lead these technology efforts, he said.

The end of the Cold War has given the U.S. "a once-in-a-lifetime chance" to turn many high technologies designed for defense to civilian uses, Peña said. "Transportation offers the single best arena to harness high technology to real human needs," he said.

(more)

Peña said the Clinton Administration is "determined that new technologies developed in America should have a chance to be commercialized here in America -- not forced to go abroad for lack of funding and support."

Peering into the future, Peña said that one day a suburban commuter getting up in the morning will be able to switch on a computer or television and get advice on how best to commute to work, taking into account road and traffic conditions, etc. If the commuter drives a lightweight, near-zero emission car, the vehicle will have guidance and navigation gear to provide information on routes and delays ahead.

In connection with the start of the fair, Secretary Peña announced the signing of agreements and the award of technology grants including:

- o The selection of a National Automated Highway System Consortium (NAHSC) to develop, in partnership with DOT, the prototype for an Automated Highway System (AHS). The Federal Highway Administration will provide 80 percent of the estimated \$200 million AHS development costs over a seven-year period.

- o \$36.9 million in cooperative research agreements as part of a public-private partnership to enhance American shipbuilding. The agreements were awarded on a competitive basis by DOT's Maritime Administration.

- o \$19.5 million from the Federal Transit Administration for a cooperative public/private project to the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) in San Francisco that will permit the system to nearly double its capacity on existing facilities without laying a single mile of new track or disrupting service.

- o Almost \$7 million in Federal Aviation Administration research grants, including \$4.5 million to the National Institute for Aerospace Studies and Services (NIASS) to develop improved design techniques to "harden" aircraft against the effects of terrorist explosives.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, October 12, 1994

DOT 145-94
Contact: Bill Mosley
Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT PROPOSES EXPANDED
CONSUMER PROTECTION FOR
EVENTS INVOLVING AIR TOURS

Taking action to protect sports and entertainment fans from unscrupulous air tour operators that promise, then fail to deliver or jack up the price of special event tickets, Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today proposed comprehensive federal regulations to halt these abuses.

The "Truth in Ticketing" regulations, expanded from current rules applicable to only the Super Bowl, would establish strict rules concerning advertisements, payments, refunds and price changes for all air tour packages to special events.

"For too many years, sports and entertainment fans have been ripped off by unscrupulous tour operators exploiting high-demand events," said Secretary Peña. "These regulations will require operators to tell the truth, or face the consequences."

Nationwide public attention was drawn to the problem last year when many Wisconsin Badger football fans were shocked to discover that their Rose Bowl tour packages either did not include promised tickets to the game or, upon arrival in Pasadena, were told they would have to pay hundreds of additional dollars to receive the tickets.

Proposal of the regulations was timed to coincide with the start-up of seasonal marketing for the December and January bowl games.

Under the regulations, tour operators must have a substantial number of tickets on hand or under contract before advertising the tour. Operators may not accept payment for a tour unless an actual or contracted ticket is available for the purchaser.

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If no ticket is available or no contract for a ticket exists, any payment must be returned to the consumer within three days. Additionally, if the price of the tour increases by more than 10 percent, the consumer may cancel and receive a full refund. Under no circumstance may the price of the package be raised within five days of the trip's departure. If a consumer is promised a ticket but does not receive it, the operator must refund the entire price of the tour.

The new regulation would apply to any tour that is organized for the purpose of attending a sporting, social, religious, educational, cultural, political or other event of a special nature and limited duration, and for which admission to the event is advertised as part of the tour.

Violators of the regulations would be subject to cease and desist orders, injunctions, fines and possible referral for criminal prosecution.

In the aftermath of the Rose Bowl, more than 800 fans filed complaints with the Wisconsin attorney general's office and civil lawsuits were brought against three tour operators. Currently, the Wisconsin attorney general has eight open investigations in the matter.

Secretary Peña also credited Wisconsin Sen. Herb Kohl for his key role in pressing for the regulations. In a statement released in Madison, Wis. today, Kohl said, "Badger fans can take satisfaction in knowing that they are the reason these protections are now in place across our country. I'm very pleased that Secretary Peña and the Department of Transportation responded to our objections promptly and thoroughly."

Following tomorrow's publication of the regulation in the Federal Register, a 30-day public comment period will ensue. The rule is expected to be in place in early December, prior to the start of the bowl season.

However, the Department of Transportation has begun an aggressive notification campaign to alert airlines, tour operators, travel agencies, universities and other parties that the "Truth in Ticketing" regulations will be effective prior to the December and January games. "We want to make sure that everyone is aware that they are playing under new rules this season," said Secretary Peña. "And that the game of tours-without-tickets is over."

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 3, 1994

DOT 159-94

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

AIRLINES POST SEVEN-YEAR
HIGH IN ON-TIME ARRIVALS,
DOT REPORT SAYS

The nation's 10 largest airlines in September posted their best on-time arrival record since the government began collecting this data seven years ago, the Department of Transportation said today.

According to DOT's Air Travel Consumer Report, 88.0 percent of the carriers' flights arrived on time in September, up from 83.8 percent in August and 84.6 percent in September 1993. The previous high mark was the 87.9 percent on-time record set in September 1991. In compiling the data, delays caused by mechanical problems are not counted, but will be starting next year.

The airlines reported a mishandled baggage rate of 4.35 complaints per 1,000 passengers in September, an improvement over both August's 4.85 rate and September 1993's 4.73.

Consumer filed 471 complaints with the department about airline service in September, a drop of more than 41 percent from August's total of 808 but slightly higher than September 1993's total of 461 complaints.

Consumers may file their complaints with the Office of Consumer Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation, I-25, 400 7th St., S.W., Room 10405, Washington, D.C. 20590.

The department reminded consumers who want on-time performance data for specific flights to call their airline ticket offices or their travel agents. This information is available on the computerized reservation systems used by these agents.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 15, 1994

DOT 162-94
Contact: Richard Mintz
Tel.: (202) 366-4570

DOT TO MOVE FORWARD
WITH PUBLIC MEETING
IN GM C/K PICKUP CASE

The Department of Transportation today announced that it will proceed with a scheduled December 6 meeting on the General Motors C/K pickup investigation and specified additional information it was seeking that could be useful in making a final decision to close the case or order a recall.

Public meetings "serve the important function of helping to further inform the department of additional relevant factual and legal matters before a final decision . . ." is made, said DOT General Counsel Stephen Kaplan in a letter to General Motors explaining the department's action. Last month, GM wrote to Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña requesting that the meeting be cancelled and that the case proceed directly to court.

". . . The Secretary feels that it is important to ensure that the public meeting in fact serves both to elicit relevant information and to provide a fair and balanced opportunity for all perspectives to be presented. Towards that end, the department today is submitting for Federal Register publication a notice requesting that interested persons desiring to appear at the meeting address certain identified issues which the Secretary views as helpful in reaching his final decision," the letter continued.

The Federal Register notice includes the following issues that the department asked to be addressed at the December 6 public meeting:

- Information supporting or refuting the technical analysis that an increased risk of fire, fatalities and injuries exists in the trucks.

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- Awareness by the manufacturer of increased risk of post-crash fires at or after the time of design and efforts to eliminate or mitigate that risk.
- The criteria for evaluating whether an increased safety risk is unreasonable.

On October 17, Secretary Peña made an initial decision that a safety defect exists in 1973-87 model GM C/K pickup trucks with fuel tanks mounted outside the frame rails. In making the announcement, he found that based on the record at that time, these trucks demonstrated an increased safety risk and that the increased risk was unreasonable. Peña's initial decision was based on a technical analysis by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) demonstrating that since the trucks were introduced in 1973, there were approximately 150 fatalities in crashes that were otherwise survivable and that GM was aware of the increased risk associated with the design of the trucks but did not take steps to provide adequate protection.

The December 6 public meeting in Washington will allow interested parties the opportunity to provide additional information and arguments on the issues raised in this case. Parties interested in participating in the public meeting should contact the NHTSA Office of Defect Investigation by Nov. 28 at (202) 366-2850 or in writing to 400 Seventh St., S.W., Room 5326, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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Copies of the letter and Federal Register notice may be obtained by calling (202) 366-5571.

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News:

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Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 16, 1994

DOT 163-94

Contact: Elaine Matrigali

Tel.: (202) 366-5574

**WILLIAM ADAMS NAMED ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OF DOT'S OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced the appointment of William S. Adams Jr. as associate director of DOT's Office of Public Information.

"I am pleased that someone as talented and experienced as Bill has agreed to accept this position," Secretary Peña said. "He brings more than 18 years of media and congressional experience to the department making him an ideal choice for the job."

Prior to accepting his new position, Adams served as press secretary for the Senate Judiciary Committee. He also served as press secretary for Sen. Terry Sanford, 1992-1993, and Sen. Alan Dixon, 1988-1992. From 1987 to 1988, he was deputy press secretary for Sen. Sam Nunn.

While director of communications at the National Partnership to Prevent Drug and Alcohol Abuse Among Youth, Inc., (1985-1986) Adams developed a media plan, staffed the advisory panel and wrote and produced publications.

Adams came to the Washington, D.C. area from Georgia in 1981 as press secretary to Rep. Charles Hatcher. He served in that position until 1984, when he left to become a research associate for Ogilvy & Mather Public Relations. From 1984-1985, he was manager for editorial and legislative services at Cook-Ruef Public Affairs, Inc.

Adams was a member of the legislative staff on the Industry Committee in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1976 to 1979.

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He received his BA from the University of Georgia School of Journalism in 1976 and did graduate studies at Georgia State in public finance, public sector economics and government administration (1977-1978).

Adams and his wife, the former Jill Griffin, make their home in Arlington, Va., with their two children.

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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, November 23, 1994

DOT 164-94
Contact: Roslyn Kaiser
Tel: (202) 366-5571
Albert Alvarez
Tel: (202) 366-3784

DOT PERMITS LOWER PERCENTAGE OF
REQUIRED RANDOM DRUG TESTING;
DISALLOWS BLOOD TESTING FOR ALCOHOL

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today issued a final rule that lowers the minimum random drug testing rate from 50 percent to 25 percent where the random positive rate for an entire industry -- such as aviation, railroads, transit or motor carriers -- is less than 1.0 percent for two calendar years.

The rules now require annual random drug testing of a number equal to 50 percent of the employees in safety-sensitive positions, such as airline pilots and mechanics, train and transit operators, and truck and bus drivers with commercial drivers' licenses.

Based on today's action, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Railroad Administration will reduce the random drug testing rate for the aviation and railroad industries to 25 percent, effective Jan. 1, 1995. Less than 1 percent of the employees selected for random testing in these industries tested positive for drugs during the last two years.

Complete data for random drug testing in the other transportation industries is not currently available. In March 1995, industries will begin reporting drug-testing results for testing required in 1994. The reports are now required under rules issued by the department's operating administrations in 1993.

"By taking this action, we are rewarding the industries' success in reducing drug use, while still maintaining adequate levels of detection and deterrence," said Secretary Peña. "Industries will save up to an estimated 40 percent of the cost of random testing by achieving an extremely low level of drug use."

In a separate rulemaking action related to alcohol testing, which starts Jan. 1, 1995, the department decided not to authorize blood testing for alcohol in post-accident and reasonable suspicion situations, when evidential breath testing devices are not available.

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In a third action today, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), announced that it will shortly approve a list of non-evidential devices that may be used for alcohol screening tests, including one saliva and several breath testing devices. The non-evidential devices are substantially less expensive and may provide employers with greater flexibility. However, they may not be used for DOT programs until the department issues a rule for testing procedures. Evidential breath testing is still required within 20 minutes to follow up positive results on screening tests.

Random Drug Testing. The present rate required for random drug testing is 50 percent annually -- that is, an employer must conduct a number of tests equal to 50 percent of those safety-sensitive transportation employees who are subject to the department's drug-testing rules.

The rate for any industry is reduced to 25 percent when the industry-wide positive rate is less than 1.0 percent for two calendar years. The rate will return to 50 percent if the industry random positive rate is 1.0 percent or higher in any subsequent calendar year. The industry-wide rate will be calculated from data submitted to DOT's operating administrations and will be announced yearly.

Alcohol Testing. Starting with large companies Jan. 1, 1995, nearly eight million transportation employees in safety-sensitive positions in industries that DOT regulates (aviation, railroads, motor carriers, transit and pipelines) will be subject to alcohol testing as well as drug testing rules.

The final rules on alcohol testing, published Feb. 15, 1994, require that all testing for alcohol be conducted on evidential breath testing devices approved by NHTSA. At the time the rule was published, DOT also sought comment on whether blood testing should be used in certain limited circumstances -- for reasonable suspicion and post-accident tests, when evidential breath testing was not available.

After reviewing the comments on this proposal, the department decided not to authorize the use of blood testing for alcohol. There are many problems with establishing a program for blood testing, including concerns about invasiveness. DOT estimates that there will not be large numbers of "tests that are missed" because breath testing devices are not available.

However, to collect more data on "missed tests," DOT operating administrations will require employers to submit reports of reasonable suspicion and post-accident tests that could not be conducted in a timely fashion.

All rulemaking will be published in the Federal Register.

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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 29, 1994

DOT 165-94
Contact: Bill Mosley
Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT EXPANDS CONSUMER PROTECTION FOR EVENTS INVOLVING AIR TOURS

The U.S. Department of Transportation, acting to protect consumers purchasing air tours in which a ticket to a sporting or other event is advertised as part of the package, today issued its final "Truth in Ticketing" rules concerning advertisements, payments, refunds and price changes for such tours.

Under the new rules, which become effective Dec. 7, tour operators must have a substantial number of event tickets on hand or under contract before advertising an air tour that includes such a ticket. Operators may not accept payment for a tour unless an actual ticket is available for the purchaser or the tour operator has a firm contract for the ticket.

"While the majority of tour operators keep their promises, new rules are needed to prevent a few unscrupulous companies from leaving sports and entertainment fans standing outside the gate," Transportation Secretary Federico Peña said. "From now on, if air tour operators advertise tickets to an event, the new rules require them to deliver or refund the entire tour price."

Nationwide attention was drawn to the problem last year when many Wisconsin Badger football fans learned that their Rose Bowl air tour packages either did not include promised tickets to the game or, upon arrival in Pasadena, were told they would have to pay hundreds of additional dollars to receive the tickets.

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According to the regulations, if a tour operator receives a booking for which no ticket is available or no firm contract for a ticket exists, the payment must be returned to the consumer within three days. In addition, if the price of the tour increases by more than 10 percent, the consumer may cancel and receive a full refund. The price of the tour package may not be raised within 10 days of departure, and if a consumer is promised a ticket but does not receive it, the operator must refund the entire price of the tour.

The new comprehensive regulations, which were proposed Oct. 12, extend the current protections for consumers purchasing Super Bowl air tours to those organized for the purpose of attending any sporting, social, religious, educational, cultural, political or other event of a special nature and limited duration, and for which admission to the event is advertised as part of the tour.

Violators of the regulations would be subject to cease and desist orders, injunctions, fines and possible referral for criminal prosecution.

The department reminded travelers that if a game ticket is not specifically mentioned in newspapers advertisements or other solicitation material or listed as a tour feature, the ticket probably is not included.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, December 6, 1994

DOT 171-94
Contact: Bill Mosley
Tel.: (202) 366-5571

DOT ISSUES MONTHLY
AIR TRAVEL CONSUMER REPORT

The Department of Transportation today issued its monthly Air Travel Consumer Report, which contains information about airline on-time arrivals, mishandled baggage and consumer complaints for October and passengers denied boarding, or bumped, for the third quarter of 1994.

The 10 largest U.S. carriers posted an 85.9 percent on-time arrival record in October, down from September's 88.0 percent mark but an improvement over October 1993's 83.0 percent. In compiling the data, delays caused by mechanical problems are not counted, but will be starting next year.

The airlines reported a mishandled baggage rate of 4.70 complaints per 1,000 passengers in October, not as good as September's 4.35 rate but a slight improvement over October 1993's 4.75.

Consumers filed 548 complaints with the department about airline service in October, an increase over both September's 471 complaints and October 1993's total of 451.

U.S. airlines posted a bumping rate of 1.26 per 10,000 passengers for the third quarter of 1994, an increase over both the second quarter's rate of 1.18 and the 1.15 rate posted during July-September 1993. The carriers posted a bumping rate of 1.34 during the first nine months of 1994, up from the 1.15 mark recorded during January-September 1993.

Consumers may file their complaints with the Office of Consumer Affairs, U.S. Department of Transportation, I-25, 400 7th St., S.W., Room 10405, Washington, D.C. 20590.

The department reminded consumers who want on-time performance data for specific flights to call their airline ticket offices or their travel agents. This information is available on the computerized reservation systems used by these agents.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, December 12, 1994

DOT 176-94
Contact: Liz Hoefer
Tel.: (202) 366-6610

**DOT OPENS NEW 'CUSTOMER SERVICE
CENTER " THE DOT CONNECTION**

The U.S. Department of Transportation's new DOT Connection, "Customer Service Center" is open for business.

The DOT Connection provides complete information and assistance covering the full range of employment, career and worklife needs of all DOT and federal employees, as well as employment information to the general public.

The Departmental Office of Personnel is responsible for the center, which opened officially for business on Dec. 1, after a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 30. It is located on the NE Plaza Level (PL-402) of the DOT Headquarters Building in Washington, D.C.

At the opening ceremony, Ann Bormolini, the department's Chief of Staff, emphasized the importance of employees when it comes to reinventing government and accomplishing the department's mission. "We are our own first customer," she said.

The Center's motto, "Connecting You to the Future," depicts its objective to help employees adapt to change by managing their careers and home life to enhance their productivity. It reflects the belief that by supporting customers with quality service, those customers can return, in kind, quality service to the American public.

The development of the center is linked with the National Performance Review's (NPR) invitation to employees to make government work better, cost less and be more responsive to its customers. A DOT employee responded to the challenge with a suggestion that the department combine existing employee services into a "one-stop shopping center." The concept of teaming people who were providing separate but related services into a single, accessible location, supported the cultural change initiated by the NPR.

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The DOT Connection is staffed by a team of human resources consultants who provide personal services, from job search and confidential career counseling, to locating child and elder care. It houses a reference library with more than 500 current publications on worklife and career development. The center is equipped with multi-media computer workstations, VCRs and other technology that complement the personal assistance given by the staff. There is also a classroom equipped with satellite capabilities.

The Center provides information by telephone and FAX. The local telephone number is (202) 366-9391. Nationwide, the toll-free number is 1-800-525-2878.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 14, 1994

DOT 178-94

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

**SECRETARY PEÑA ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE
TO IMPROVE AIRLINE SAFETY**

New York -- In the wake of yesterday's fatal commuter plane crash in North Carolina, Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced a three-point initiative to reinforce the government's commitment to the highest level of aviation safety.

"Safety is -- and always will be -- the fundamental thread running through everything we do in aviation," the Secretary said in a speech to the Wings Club. "Public confidence depends on our making continuous gains in passenger safety."

Secretary Peña said that the department's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) "is undertaking the most comprehensive review ever to ensure that all travelers enjoy one level of safety -- the highest -- whether they fly on small commuter planes or jumbo jets." FAA will complete within 100 days the rulemaking process already underway to bring commuter safety regulations up to the standard of large airliners, the Secretary said. He added that FAA is finalizing new rules on crew pairing "to ensure that there is always enough experience in the cockpit." The agency also will revise training and duty time requirements, he said.

In addition, the Secretary said that he and FAA Administrator David Hinson will meet with airline chief executives, safety chiefs, pilots and manufacturers as soon as possible to discuss public concerns about safety and learn what the industry can do to address these concerns. The third part of the initiative will be a surveillance of all airline safety programs and safety oversight procedures to assure that the carriers are aggressively addressing all issues of air safety.

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"We all know that despite last evening's tragedy, America's airline industry has compiled a track record -- for many years running -- of steadily increasing safety and declining rates of accidents and fatalities," Secretary Peña said.

"But these statistics have little meaning at a time like this," he added. "They cannot console the bereaved -- or sustain the public confidence this industry needs."

The Secretary noted that the department has taken a series of strong actions over the past two years to enhance air safety. The administration requested funding for, and the FAA is now hiring, 300 new safety inspectors and support personnel. Additionally, it is:

- establishing a new FAA safety office which reports directly to the administrator;
- insisting on retaining safety oversight within the FAA even after the air traffic system is restructured into a government corporation;
- issuing new duty-time and training regulations for safety personnel; and
- barring flights by ATR-42 and ATR-72 aircraft when icing conditions are present or forecast.

Each year, the FAA conducts some 400,000 safety inspections to ensure compliance with federal aviation regulations. The FAA will continue to hold air carriers to the highest level of safety and will not hesitate to exercise its authority to safeguard the traveling public, Hinson said.

Secretary Peña and Administrator Hinson flew to Raleigh, N.C., this morning and met with the National Transportation Safety Board investigative team. The NTSB is responsible for determining the probable cause of the accident. Secretary Peña then flew to New York for the Wings Club speech, a previously-scheduled address.

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226681
M-456

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, December 15, 1994

DOT 179-94
Contact: BTS Product Line
Tel.: (202) 366-DATA

U.S.-MEXICO, U.S.-CANADA SURFACE TRADE INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM DOT

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced that computer information on rail, truck and pipeline trade between the U.S. and Canada and the U.S. and Mexico from April through June 1994 is available to the public on diskette from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"This previously unpublished data could serve as a valuable resource to businesses here and abroad, especially those companies that want to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)," Secretary Peña said.

The information on transborder movement of commodities by mode of transportation will be valuable to shippers and carriers for marketing efforts and to assure that an adequate supply of equipment is available. The data are also important to government planners for evaluation of infrastructure needs at various border crossings, and will be used to evaluate the growth of post-NAFTA trade.

Based on June 1994 data, for example, 92 percent of the value of exports to Mexico was transported by truck and eight percent by rail while 80 percent of the value of imports from Mexico was carried by truck, 19 percent by rail and one percent by pipeline. Eighty-eight percent of the value of exports to Canada was carried by truck and 12 percent by rail, while 67 percent of the value of imports from Canada was moved by truck, 26 percent by rail and seven percent by pipeline.

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Information on the trade flow for the months of April 1993 through March 1994 was released in August 1994 as a set on 12 diskettes. Data for April 1994 through June 1994 are available now and are being sent to new customers in addition to those who had previously requested it. Data will be available on a single diskette for each month thereafter.

Beginning with the April 1994 data, 12 monthly files (previously nine) are being released that include additional commodity and geographic data. These changes are explained on the diskettes.

The department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) produced the diskettes that include monthly summarized transborder data files with commodity group and geographic information on exports and imports that were provided to the department by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. In addition, the diskettes contain narrative highlights developed by DOT's Federal Railroad Administration.

Dr. T.R. Lakshmanan, Director of the BTS said, "The availability of the transborder data files is vital to the transportation community. The ability to provide this previously obscure information on diskette makes the data more readily and widely available to planners and analysts in both the private and public sectors, and allows for convenience and easier use of the material."

To order the diskettes or for further information, contact the Bureau of Transportation Statistics at (202) 366-DATA.

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Wednesday, December 14, 1994

DOT 178-94

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

**SECRETARY PEÑA ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE
TO IMPROVE AIRLINE SAFETY**

New York -- In the wake of yesterday's fatal commuter plane crash in North Carolina, Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced a three-point initiative to reinforce the government's commitment to the highest level of aviation safety.

"Safety is -- and always will be -- the fundamental thread running through everything we do in aviation," the Secretary said in a speech to the Wings Club. "Public confidence depends on our making continuous gains in passenger safety."

Secretary Peña said that the department's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) "is undertaking the most comprehensive review ever to ensure that all travelers enjoy one level of safety -- the highest -- whether they fly on small commuter planes or jumbo jets." FAA will complete within 100 days the rulemaking process already underway to bring commuter safety regulations up to the standard of large airliners, the Secretary said. He added that FAA is finalizing new rules on crew pairing "to ensure that there is always enough experience in the cockpit." The agency also will revise training and duty time requirements, he said.

In addition, the Secretary said that he and FAA Administrator David Hinson will meet with airline chief executives, safety chiefs, pilots and manufacturers as soon as possible to discuss public concerns about safety and learn what the industry can do to address these concerns. The third part of the initiative will be a surveillance of all airline safety programs and safety oversight procedures to assure that the carriers are aggressively addressing all issues of air safety.

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"We all know that despite last evening's tragedy, America's airline industry has compiled a track record -- for many years running -- of steadily increasing safety and declining rates of accidents and fatalities," Secretary Peña said.

"But these statistics have little meaning at a time like this," he added. "They cannot console the bereaved -- or sustain the public confidence this industry needs."

The Secretary noted that the department has taken a series of strong actions over the past two years to enhance air safety. The administration requested funding for, and the FAA is now hiring, 300 new safety inspectors and support personnel. Additionally, it is:

- establishing a new FAA safety office which reports directly to the administrator;
- insisting on retaining safety oversight within the FAA even after the air traffic system is restructured into a government corporation;
- issuing new duty-time and training regulations for safety personnel; and
- barring flights by ATR-42 and ATR-72 aircraft when icing conditions are present or forecast.

Each year, the FAA conducts some 400,000 safety inspections to ensure compliance with federal aviation regulations. The FAA will continue to hold air carriers to the highest level of safety and will not hesitate to exercise its authority to safeguard the traveling public, Hinson said.

Secretary Peña and Administrator Hinson flew to Raleigh, N.C., this morning and met with the National Transportation Safety Board investigative team. The NTSB is responsible for determining the probable cause of the accident. Secretary Peña then flew to New York for the Wings Club speech, a previously-scheduled address.

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U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

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APA-4

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, December 15, 1994

DOT 179-94
Contact: BTS Product Line
Tel.: (202) 366-DATA

U.S.-MEXICO, U.S.-CANADA SURFACE TRADE INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM DOT

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced that computer information on rail, truck and pipeline trade between the U.S. and Canada and the U.S. and Mexico from April through June 1994 is available to the public on diskette from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"This previously unpublished data could serve as a valuable resource to businesses here and abroad, especially those companies that want to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)," Secretary Peña said.

The information on transborder movement of commodities by mode of transportation will be valuable to shippers and carriers for marketing efforts and to assure that an adequate supply of equipment is available. The data are also important to government planners for evaluation of infrastructure needs at various border crossings, and will be used to evaluate the growth of post-NAFTA trade.

Based on June 1994 data, for example, 92 percent of the value of exports to Mexico was transported by truck and eight percent by rail while 80 percent of the value of imports from Mexico was carried by truck, 19 percent by rail and one percent by pipeline. Eighty-eight percent of the value of exports to Canada was carried by truck and 12 percent by rail, while 67 percent of the value of imports from Canada was moved by truck, 26 percent by rail and seven percent by pipeline.

- more -

Information on the trade flow for the months of April 1993 through March 1994 was released in August 1994 as a set on 12 diskettes. Data for April 1994 through June 1994 are available now and are being sent to new customers in addition to those who had previously requested it. Data will be available on a single diskette for each month thereafter.

Beginning with the April 1994 data, 12 monthly files (previously nine) are being released that include additional commodity and geographic data. These changes are explained on the diskettes.

The department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) produced the diskettes that include monthly summarized transborder data files with commodity group and geographic information on exports and imports that were provided to the department by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. In addition, the diskettes contain narrative highlights developed by DOT's Federal Railroad Administration.

Dr. T.R. Lakshmanan, Director of the BTS said, "The availability of the transborder data files is vital to the transportation community. The ability to provide this previously obscure information on diskette makes the data more readily and widely available to planners and analysts in both the private and public sectors, and allows for convenience and easier use of the material."

To order the diskettes or for further information, contact the Bureau of Transportation Statistics at (202) 366-DATA.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

For Immediate Release
Monday, December 19, 1994

DOT Contact: Richard Mintz,
Bill Adams
(202) 366-4570

PEÑA UNVEILS PLANS FOR MAJOR DOT RESTRUCTURING

"Build Bridges, Not Bureaucracy"

Accelerating a streamlining effort begun two years ago, U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Peña today announced a major departmental restructuring that will cut the bureaucracy in half while maintaining federal infrastructure investment commitments near current levels. The total workforce will be cut by nearly fifty percent from 1992 levels, the number of individual agencies will be reduced from ten to three, and thirty funding programs will be reorganized into three.

The restructuring, expected to save more than \$6.7 billion in budget outlays over five years, targets waste and duplication and makes safety and infrastructure investment the absolute focus of the Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT was expected to spend approximately \$200 billion over the next five years.

Peña said, "Two years ago, the Clinton Administration came to Washington to improve the way government serves its customers -- the American people. Our goal has always been a smaller, more effective federal government, and toward that end DOT has already trimmed its workforce by 4,000 positions, saving \$250 million a year in salaries.

"We did not create the government we inherited, but we are moving to fix it -- by making safety and investment our key missions and by giving resources and authority back to the states and localities where these decisions are best made," Peña said at a White House press conference announcing the changes. "We are all about building bridges, not bureaucracy; picking priorities, not pork; moving people, not paper; and above all ensuring travellers' safety."

The restructuring is based on a consolidation of the current DOT structure; streamlining numerous grants, loan and subsidy programs, and downsizing DOT and its workforce.

The plan consolidates DOT's ten current agencies into three. The new entities would be organized either around the core missions of safety and investment; or around surface, aviation, and maritime functions. The final structure will be decided after consultations with Congress and the public.

-- more --

Downsizing efforts will also continue. Total DOT employment will be cut by nearly half from 1993 levels of 106,000 military and civilian personnel. Over 40,000 positions will be moved off the government roles with the corporatization of the air traffic control system. And beyond the 4000 employees already cut, another 7000 civilian and military positions will be eliminated.

The plan streamlines DOT's more than 30 myriad grant, loan and subsidy programs, each with separate eligibility requirements and procedures. Under the plan announced today, three new funding categories will be created: unified state allocations; State Infrastructure Banks established with federal seed capital; and discretionary grants for projects of national or regional significance.

Federal funds will be allocated directly to states and localities. Although the project planning and selection process will be unified, the Highway and Aviation Trust Funds will remain totally separate: the Aviation fund will only be used to pay for airport-related projects, while the Highway funds will be limited to surface projects.

These changes will make it easier and more cost-effective for states and localities to apply for and to receive federal funds, and will discourage states and localities from pursuing pork barrel earmarking because a project does not fit into any program category, or because getting a congressional earmark is simpler than figuring out DOT processes and categories.

State Infrastructure Banks will leverage additional investment in transportation from private capital and other sources. Further, DOT will adopt a variety of innovative finance principles tested and proven over the past year. These new ways of doing business are expected to dramatically increase the value and leverage potential of Federal investment more than offsetting slight reductions in overall direct federal support for transportation infrastructure improvements anticipated under today's plan.

States will be allowed to use money from the unified grants now being proposed to purchase or subsidize passenger rail service from Amtrak or other railroads. This will assist Amtrak in its efforts to become more competitive and market driven. Operating and capital subsidies to Amtrak will be continued for a number of years to preserve rail passenger service while Amtrak is being restructured.

Also, Air Traffic Control (ATC) operations now performed by the Federal Aviation Administration will be transferred into a private or government corporation wholly funded by user fees, improving the service and safety for users and cutting the Federal payroll by about 40,000 employees.

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STATEMENT ON DOT RESTRUCTURING
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERICO PEÑA
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
DECEMBER 19, 1994

Transportation Trends



Almost two years ago, this Administration came to Washington determined to make this government work better for the people who pay for it -- the working families of America. At the Department of Transportation, that's exactly what we've done.

We've increased investment in America's roads, bridges and other vital infrastructure. We've helped revitalize critical American industries -- like aviation and shipbuilding -- and saved thousands of good jobs. We've cut red tape to speed help to Americans hit by floods and earthquakes. And we've cut 4,000 government employees -- saving \$250 million a year in salaries.

My vision for the DOT is to position it for leadership in the 21st Century. That vision would:

- give more authority and flexibility for transportation investments to governors and mayors who best know what the priorities should be;
- increase total transportation investment by cutting red tape and leveraging scarce federal resources through partnerships with state and local governments and the private sector;
- reduce the size of government and to eliminate waste and duplication -- the way so many American businesses have done.

I believe this vision reflects what Americans want from their government. And I look forward to working with the Congress to bring this change. Today, we're taking the next bold step by announcing a major restructuring designed to focus our resources even more sharply on our two most fundamental missions: investing in transportation infrastructure and ensuring the safety of the travelling public.

We have three key strategies to do this.

First, consolidation. We will continue to simplify the DOT by reducing the current ten operating administrations to three.

Second, downsizing. We will continue to eliminate every redundancy we can find, to reduce our workforce, to save the taxpayer's money, and to get the most we can

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary, Public Affairs
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out of every dollar we invest. We will function more like the private sector by transferring 40,000 air traffic control employees out of the government and into a new corporation.

Third; streamlining. DOT now operates more than 30 grant, loan, and subsidy programs -- each with its own rules and regulations. We propose to streamline these into three targeted programs.

The first will be a unified grant program -- to be given directly to states and localities who will be able to decide which investments best meet *their* needs. The incentive to come to Washington to beg for special projects will be sharply reduced. The second will establish State Infrastructure Banks -- to stretch taxpayer dollars -- by continuing to "leverage" federal seed money in partnerships with local governments and private businesses. The third will be a federal discretionary fund to invest in transportation infrastructure projects of regional or national significance that states may not be able to complete without national support or coordination.

All these steps will produce a leaner, more efficient Department of Transportation. What we are all about is: building bridges, not bureaucracy; picking real priorities, not pork; moving people, not paper; and above all, ensuring travellers' safety. It's also about continuing the crusade that President Clinton and Vice President Gore have led so well -- to make this government work better and cost less. All told, these changes will save taxpayers at least \$6.7 billion by 1999. We'll pass those savings on -- as tax relief -- to working families.

To the millions of Americans who want better transportation to get to work or get their kids to school or get their products to market, I say: these changes will give you the transportation you need. To the mayors and governors and industries and citizens' groups with real stakes in transportation, I say: work with me to make these changes work for you. And to the dedicated employees within my Department, I say: your efforts have been and will always be valued. Your input and insight is critical to how we manage change.

To everyone who cares about our country and how good transportation makes us stronger, I say: the question is not whether we will change, but how. How will we give Americans more value for the dollars they send us? How will we do more with less? How will we manage change so that we can keep travellers safe and continue to build the roads, bridges, subways, rail systems, seaports, and airports that Americans depend on?

The President and Vice President have my commitment to deliver these changes to make government work better and deliver a difference to working Americans. Thank you very much.

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DOT RESTRUCTURING: PROGRAM OUTLINE

Consolidation

Our goal is to consolidate 10 operating agencies into three gaining economies by collapsing policy making, administrative, and management functions into new agencies with more focused missions. Two options are currently under consideration.

- o mission option -- three components: safety, transportation investment and Coast Guard.
- o functional option -- three components: surface, aviation, and CoastGuard/maritime

Streamlining

DOT currently operates more than 30 grant, loan and subsidy programs, each with separate eligibility requirements and procedures. These programs will be reengineered into three broad programs:

- 1) Unified allocations to state and local governments;
- 2) State Infrastructure Banks established with Federal seed capital; and
- 3) Federal discretionary grants for transportation infrastructure of national or regional significance.

Downsizing

The Air Traffic Control (ATC) operations now performed by FAA will be transferred into a corporate entity wholly funded by user fees. New non-governmental procurement, personnel, and financing policies will improve service and safety for users of the nation's aviation system and cut the federal payroll by about 40,000 employees.

Efforts to trim the DOT workforce will continue. Consolidation and streamlining will create new opportunities for employees; other positions will be eliminated. Between ATC and other downsizing efforts, the total DOT workforce will be cut almost in half by 2000.

The Commitment to Transportation Investment

Total budget savings from the restructuring are estimated at \$6.7 billion over five years. Overall direct federal support for transportation investment will be slightly reduced from the expected \$200 billion over the next five years. The reductions are expected to be more than offset by new funding programs which will allow states and localities greater flexibility, authority, and leverage to access private capital resources.

RESTRUCTURING WILL MEAN:

o More Flexibility and Authority for States and Localities

Under the new, unified allocation approach, funds will be allocated directly to the states and localities. Limited restrictions will be placed on the funds to assure fair distribution of each state's allocated amount to metropolitan areas and cities within each state. States and localities will select projects for funding.

Although the project planning and selection process will be unified, the Highway and Aviation Trust Funds will be kept totally separate: the Aviation fund will only be used to pay for airport-related projects, while the Highway fund will be limited to surface projects.

o Better Decision-Making and Better Projects

These changes will make it easier for states and localities to access Federal funds. Greater local control, simplification of regulations, and streamlining of programs will result in better investment.

The simplification of the categories and the process will also mean that better projects get funded. Projects will no longer be shaped and put forward merely because there is money available.

Further, the proposed changes will also discourage states and localities from coming to Washington to get special earmarking because a project doesn't fit into any program category, or because getting a congressional earmark is simpler than figuring out DOT processes and categories.

o The Federal Dollar will Go Further

State Infrastructure Banks (SIB's) established with seed capital provided by the Federal government will leverage additional investment in transportation from private capital and other sources.

In addition, DOT will adopt a variety of innovative finance principles tested and proven over the past year. These new ways of doing business are expected to dramatically increase the potential leverage and value of federal investment, more than offsetting slight reductions in overall direct federal support for transportation infrastructure improvements.

Other Elements

- o **Amtrak.** The States will become our partners in deciding where Amtrak should operate. States will be allowed to use money from the block grants now being proposed to purchase or subsidize passenger rail service from Amtrak or perhaps some other railroad. This will help Amtrak in its efforts to become more competitive and market driven. Operating and capital subsidies to Amtrak will be continued for a number of years to preserve rail passenger service while Amtrak is being restructured.

- o **Transit Operating Subsidies.** Operating assistance for mass transit will be continued. Discussions are underway about the possibility of restructuring operating assistance to target maintenance of federally-funded assets.

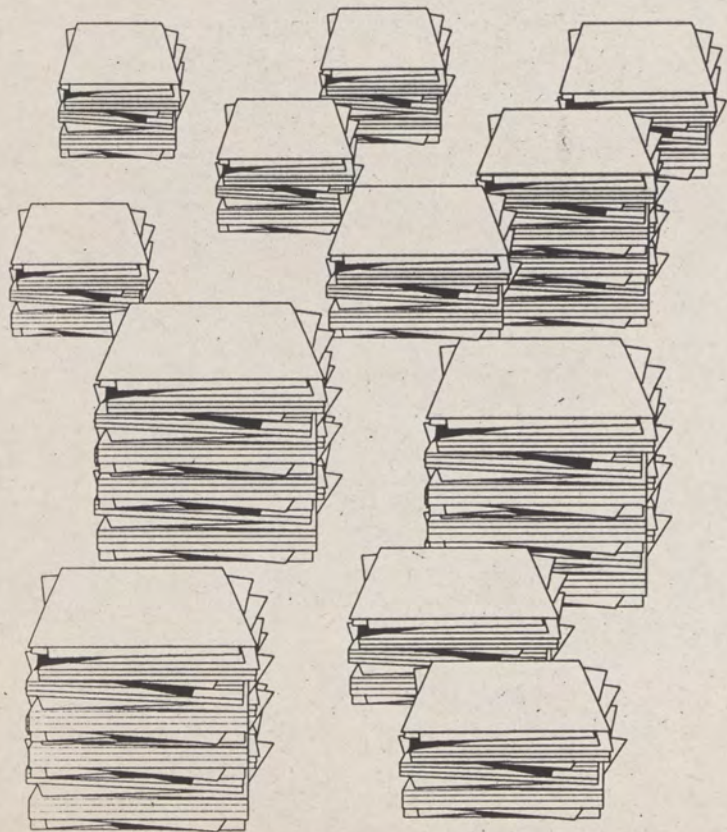
- o **Budget Impact.** Departmental restructuring, program reductions and consolidations, and other steps will produce \$6.7 billion in budget outlay savings over five years. Current plans call for approximately \$5 billion of this amount to come from the Department's total infrastructure investment program.

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STREAMLINE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Reduce the current 30+ grant, loan, and subsidy programs to three

- *Streamlined application processes*
- *Increased spending flexibility for states and localities*
- *More efficient use of Federal resources*



**Formula Grants
To States And Localities**



Federal Discretionary Grants

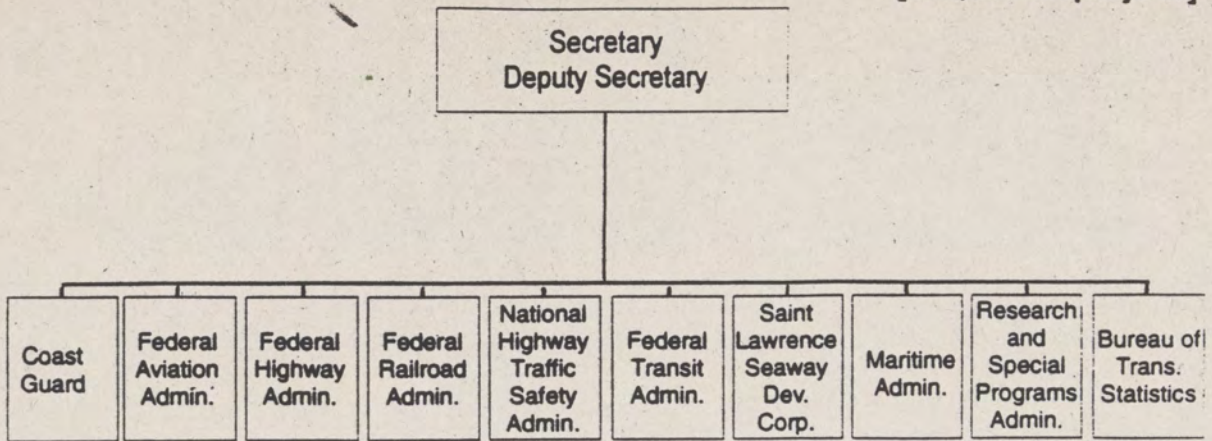


State Infrastructure Banks

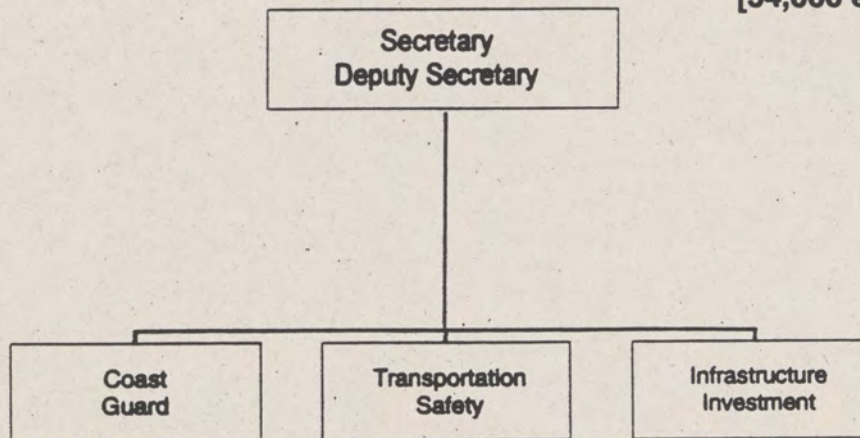


DOT CORE COMPONENTS

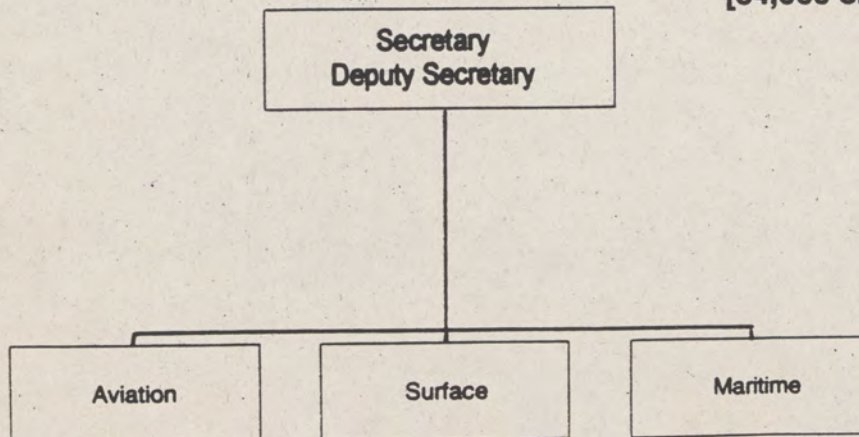
CURRENT
[104,000 employees]



OPTION "A"
[54,000 employees]



OPTION "B"
[54,000 employees]





U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY
December 19, 1994

DOT 180-94
Contact: Ed O'Hara
Tel.: (202) 366-5571

AT&T TO PAY U.S. \$13.9 MILLION TO SETTLE CHARGES IN LEASE OF AIR TRAFFIC SWITCHES

The American Telephone and Telegraph Co. has agreed to pay the government \$13.9 million to settle allegations that it failed to provide accurate and complete pricing information in negotiating a \$23 million (plus interest) Federal Aviation Administration lease for unique electronic switches.

Department of Transportation General Counsel Stephen H. Kaplan announced the settlement involving the lease for switches which serve as a vital link in the FAA's air traffic control system.

Under the settlement, AT&T will pay the U.S. government \$5.5 million in cash and will reduce by \$8.4 million the amount due under FAA's remaining lease and related contracts. The lease will expire Feb. 29, 1996, if the FAA exercises the final option year under the contract.

Attorney's from DOT's Office of General Counsel worked with investigators from DOT's Office of Inspector General, FAA officials and Justice Department attorneys in negotiating the settlement.

The government alleged that AT&T knowingly failed to provide government negotiators with the so-called net book value of the switches while negotiating the lease price. The net book value was the depreciated value of the equipment on AT&T's books in 1987 and 1988, when the lease was negotiated. The U.S.'s allegations were substantiated in an investigation by DOT's Office of Inspector General and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, December 22, 1994

DOT 183-94

Contact: Bill Mosley

Tel.: (202) 366-5571

PEÑA PAVES WAY FOR NEW AVIATION
ACCORD WITH CANADA

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced a breakthrough in the effort to end more than 15 years of stagnated airline passenger and cargo travel between the United States and Canada. A framework has been agreed to under which negotiations will be conducted to produce a market-opening aviation agreement that will produce lower fares, convenient service, more jobs and support economic growth.

"This framework is a milestone in the Clinton administration's effort to promote free trade, lower costs and provide greater accessibility to markets all around the world," said Secretary Peña. "We will now move full speed ahead to negotiate an agreement which will scrap our antiquated aviation accord with Canada and adopt a modern agreement reflecting our mutual resolve for fully open transborder air service.

"I want to congratulate my counterpart and friend -- Canada's Transport Minister Doug Young -- for the vision and dedication he has shown which led to today's understandings," Peña stated.

A new agreement is anticipated to spur more than \$1 billion in new economic activity and create tens of thousands of new jobs on both sides of the border.

The current bilateral agreement, negotiated in 1966 and substantially unchanged in 20 years, has suppressed air travel and economic development between the two nations. Since 1978, airline passenger travel between the two countries has grown less than four percent annually. In contrast, U.S. service has grown four times as fast with France and Japan, and nearly five times as fast with Germany over the same period.

-more-

Nearly two-thirds of the 100 largest American cities are without non-stop service to Canada, and most routes may be served by only one airline from each country. Moreover, the antiquated agreement permits both countries to disallow market-based fares, further driving up the cost of transportation for consumers and businesses.

The out-dated accord places even more onerous restrictions on air cargo service. It senselessly limits aircraft size, package weight and size, and forces some airliners to travel empty for half the journey.

The framework developed and signed by the personal representatives of Secretary Peña and Minister Young recommends that the new bilateral agreement remove most restrictions on all-cargo services immediately and virtually deregulates the industry within 12 months.

Restrictions on passenger service would be lifted immediately, except for new U.S. carrier access to Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. There, the restrictions would be struck down in steps over 36 months, allowing Canadian carriers to adjust to the fully-competitive environment. Open code-sharing between U.S. and Canadian carriers would also be permitted.

Importantly, competitive pricing would be permitted for all transborder service, making the newly accessible routes affordable for passengers and shippers.

"Canada is our largest bilateral trading market, our partner in NAFTA and our ally in NATO, but despite these ties, our people have been denied economic opportunities and have paid far too much to travel between our nations," said Secretary Peña. "This framework represents the potential for a new era of stronger trade, more jobs, and easier, more convenient travel for millions of our citizens."

The United States and Canada share the largest bilateral aviation market in the world, with 13 million passengers travelling between the two countries last year.

Secretary Peña also announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation will immediately begin accepting applications from U.S. airlines to service numerous new routes, contingent on a conclusion of an agreement to be negotiated beginning next month. The expedited authorization of service will enable airlines, cities and consumers to take full advantage of a new agreement.

Announcement of the framework follows recently initiated informal discussions between U.S. Transportation Department General Counsel Stephen Kaplan and Canadian representative Geoffrey Elliot. The U.S. State Department has named James R. Tarrant, deputy assistant secretary, to lead the negotiations next month.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, December 29, 1994

DOT 185-94
Contact: John Salisbury
Tel.: (202) 366-5807

FEDERAL AGENCIES ADOPT NATIONAL APPROACH TO DREDGING PROJECTS

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today released an Interagency Working Group report adopted by six federal agencies establishing a national dredging policy which supports economic vitality, national security and environmental protection concerns. The Action Plan is a commitment to a reasoned approach by all of the agencies to implement 18 recommendations for improving the existing process within current resources and budget realities.

"This report responds to President Clinton's request last year that federal agencies double their efforts, without compromising environmental protection, to resolve the navigational and environmental concerns that have long stymied the dredging of our nation's ports," Secretary Peña said.

"Because 95 percent of America's foreign commerce is carried by ships and foreign trade accounts for 20 percent of our Gross Domestic Product, our ports are vital to our national security and economy. Yet many ports are located in or near some of our nation's most environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, estuaries and associated fisheries, all of which have economic, recreational and aesthetic value. Coordinated action to resolve conflicting interests is important to our national interest," Peña continued.

Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Dr. John Zirschky also praised the Interagency Working Group, "We fully endorse the report and its conclusions. The recommendations will improve the efficiency and predictability of the current system. We look forward to continued interagency coordination and cooperation in implementing this action plan."

-over-

Robert Perciasepe, Assistant Administrator for Water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, added, "This report highlights the cooperative interest of a number of federal agencies in resolving dredging and associated environmental issues. We are particularly pleased with the recommendations for advanced environmental planning in the dredging and disposal permit process."

The report's recommendations focus on four problem areas in order to: (1) strengthen the existing planning mechanism; (2) enhance coordination and communication in the dredging approval process; (3) address scientific uncertainties about dredged material; and (4) identify consistent and efficient ways to fund dredging projects.

The Interagency Working Group, convened by Secretary Peña, developed its recommendations through 22 public outreach sessions held around the country in early 1994. The ability of the Working Group to improve interagency coordination and resolve conflicts is an example, the Secretary said, of the Administration's commitment to "reinventing government."

The Interagency Working Group was chaired by Deputy Administrator Joan Yim, of the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD). Besides the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), member agencies included the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service and Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

In addition, there were liaison representatives to the Group from the White House Office on Environmental Policy, the Office of Management and Budget, the Navy and, from the Department of Transportation, the Office of the Secretary and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The current Working Group will be replaced by national and regional dredging teams, co-chaired by the Corps and the EPA, with representatives from the Transportation, Interior and Commerce departments. It is anticipated that this national team will convene in January 1995, and have responsibilities for implementing the Action Plan.

Copies of the report may be obtained from MARAD's Office of Congressional and Public Affairs (202) 366-5807.

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