

STATEMENT OF BRIAN W. CLYMER  
ADMINISTRATOR, URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION  
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL SERVICES,  
FEDERALISM AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
APRIL 23, 1990

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, MY NAME IS BRIAN CLYMER AND I AM THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION.

I APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO PRESENT THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S VIEWS ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1969 THAT WOULD AUTHORIZE \$2.16 BILLION IN NEW AND UNANTICIPATED FUNDS FOR CONTINUING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE METRORAIL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM HERE IN THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LET ME BE VERY CLEAR IN SAYING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT OPPOSE THE CONSTRUCTION OF METRORAIL BEYOND THE 89.5 MILE COMPONENT THAT IS ALREADY EITHER IN OPERATION OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

BUT WHILE WE ARE NOT IN OPPOSITION TO THIS GOAL, WE ARE IN STRONG DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PENDING LEGISLATION ON HOW THAT GOAL SHOULD BE ACHIEVED.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS FOUR-SQUARE AGAINST ANY EFFORT THAT WOULD CONTINUE A SEPARATE AUTHORIZATION FOR METRORAIL CONSTRUCTION OUTSIDE THE FEDERAL MASS TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

A SEPARATE CATEGORICAL PROGRAM MAY HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE WHEN THE FIRST SPECIAL LEGISLATION FOR METRORAIL WAS PASSED IN 1969 BECAUSE THE FEDERAL MASS TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WAS STILL IN ITS INFANCY AND NOT FULLY DEVELOPED. BUT THESE CONDITIONS DO NOT PREVAIL TODAY AND ANY CLAIMS FOR EXCLUSIVITY THAT WMATA MAY ONCE HAVE MADE ARE LONG OUT OF DATE.

NEITHER IS WMATA'S CLAIM TO A SPECIAL FEDERAL INTEREST ON ACCOUNT OF METRORAIL'S LOCATION IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL PERSUASIVE BECAUSE METRORAIL IS NONETHELESS A LOCAL SYSTEM SERVING OVERWHELMINGLY LOCAL NEEDS AND BECAUSE METRORAIL IS NOT UNIQUE IN SERVING VISITORS TO ITS CITY.

SO IT IS THE POSITION OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION THAT NOW, WITH 89.5 MILES OF THE SYSTEM ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF, NONE OF WMATA'S SPECIAL INTERESTS CLAIMS IS VALID.

THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES THAT FUTURE FUNDING DECISIONS FOR METRORAIL SHOULD BE MADE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FEDERAL MASS TRANSIT PROGRAM THAT EMERGES IN 1992, AFTER THE CURRENT PROGRAM'S AUTHORIZATION CYCLE EXPIRES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE HAVE CONTINUALLY STATED THIS POSITION IN OUR ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS TESTIMONY. SPECIFIC TESTIMONY WAS ALSO DELIVERED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON MAY 4 OF LAST YEAR THAT REITERATED THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEWS. AND SECRETARY SKINNER HAS REPEATED ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT SHOULD SUCH LEGISLATION BE PASSED BY THE CONGRESS, HE WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RECOMMEND A PRESIDENTIAL VETO.

LET ME BRIEFLY REVIEW FOR THE COMMITTEE WHY WE ARE TAKING THIS POSITION AND WHY WE BELIEVE IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF BOTH METRORAIL AND THE AMERICAN TAXPAYERS.

FIRST OF ALL, MR. CHAIRMAN, I BELIEVE THE RHETORIC ADVANCED IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL IS INACCURATE.

SUPPORTERS OF THE PENDING LEGISLATION TALK OF A FEDERAL COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE CONSTRUCTION BEYOND 89.5 MILES TO THE 103-MILE SYSTEM.

LET ME BE VERY CLEAR ON THIS POINT. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY FULFILLED ALL OF ITS METRORAIL COMMITMENTS PROVIDING ADEQUATE FUNDING TO BUILD THE ENTIRE RAIL SYSTEM. IN FACT, THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE STARK-HARRIS ACT MADE IT CLEAR THAT SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR THE METRORAIL SYSTEM WOULD CONCLUDE WITH THE PASSAGE OF THAT BILL.

MR. CHAIRMAN, IT HAS BEEN METRORAIL THAT HAS FAILED TO EXECUTE ITS HALF OF THE BARGAIN, BECAUSE WHEN THE MOST RECENT FUNDING PACKAGE WAS PUT TOGETHER IN 1979, IT PROVIDED FUNDING FOR A FULL SYSTEM, NOT MERELY 89.5 MILES.

WE'RE NOT TALKING HERE ABOUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BACKING AWAY FROM A COMMITMENT. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A PROJECT WHOSE COST HAS GONE FAR BEYOND CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, METRORAIL REMAINS A FINE ACCOMPLISHMENT.

BUT METRORAIL HAS ALSO REPRESENTED AN ENORMOUS EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL FUNDS.

THE FEDERAL INVESTMENT ALONE TO COMPLETE THE FIRST 89.5 MILES WILL BE JUST UNDER \$8 BILLION, GIVING THIS METROPOLITAN AREA MORE FEDERAL MASS TRANSIT ASSISTANCE ON A PER CAPITA BASIS THAN ANY OTHER AREA IN THE COUNTRY. THIS FUNDING LEVEL OF \$8 BILLION ALSO REPRESENTS 60% OF THE TOTAL FUNDING THAT HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR NEW TRANSIT SYSTEMS NATIONWIDE SINCE 1968.

FOR THAT MATTER, MR. CHAIRMAN, EVEN THE PROPOSED NEW AUTHORIZATION OF \$2.16 BILLION WILL NOT GUARANTEE THE COMPLETION OF THE 103-MILE SYSTEM. BECAUSE THE \$2.16 BILLION FIGURE IS NOTHING BUT A TWO-YEAR OLD ESTIMATE OF WHAT THE FINAL SYSTEM COST MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE.

AND IT'S AN ESTIMATE THAT WAS GENERATED FROM THE SAME SOURCES THAT HAVE PROVEN IN THE PAST TO BE SO CONSISTENTLY INCORRECT IN PROJECTING ACTUAL METRORAIL CONSTRUCTION COSTS.

A SECOND MAJOR OBJECTION TO THIS LEGISLATION, MR. CHAIRMAN, IS WMATA'S RELUCTANCE TO ASSUME A GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE METRORAIL SYSTEM.

TODAY, THE VERY NATURE OF FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE IS CHANGING. AS SPELLED OUT IN A NEW NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY THAT WAS RELEASED BY PRESIDENT BUSH ON MARCH 8th OF THIS YEAR, THE RESPECTIVE ROLES ... AND CONSEQUENT RESPONSIBILITIES ... OF FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL JURISDICTIONS ARE CHANGING.

AS WE LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE, WE SEE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NO LONGER PLAYING THE SINGULAR ROLE THAT IT DID IN THE PAST.

INSTEAD, WE SEE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS THE SOURCE OF A STABLE BASE LINE OF FUNDING THAT LOCAL JURISDICTIONS WILL BE ABLE TO USE MORE FLEXIBLY AND MORE IMAGINATIVELY TO MEET THEIR OWN LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES.

ALREADY, JURISDICTIONS FROM COAST-TO-COAST HAVE RECOGNIZED THIS NEW FRAME OF REFERENCE, AND ARE PROCEEDING TO IMPLEMENT THEIR MAJOR TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT PROGRAMS IN ITS LIGHT.

---IN ATLANTA A MAJOR RAIL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM APPROXIMATELY HALF THE SIZE OF THE WASHINGTON METRO HAS BEEN UNDER CONSTRUCTION SINCE 1971; FEDERAL RESOURCES HAVE BEEN USED TO FUND 50% OF ITS \$3 BILLION COST;

---IN LOS ANGELES, A NETWORK OF NEW RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEMS ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION, AND THE TOTAL FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 41%;

---IN METROPOLITAN NEW YORK, THAT AREA'S AGING RAIL TRANSIT NETWORK IS IN THE MIDST OF A 10-YEAR, \$16 BILLION REHABILITATION EFFORT AND ONLY 30% OF THE COST IS COMING FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT;

---IN BOSTON, SIMILAR RAIL REHABILITATION WORK IS UNDERWAY, AND A SIMILAR FEDERAL-TO-LOCAL COST SHARING IS IN EFFECT;

---ON THE WEST COAST, IN SEATTLE AND IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY, MAJOR MASS TRANSIT PROJECTS ARE BEING BUILT WITH A 50% FEDERAL SHARE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THIS IS THE NEW REALITY FOR FEDERAL-LOCAL  
COOPERATION IN MAJOR MASS TRANSIT INVESTMENTS.

FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, A SOLID BASE OF STABLE BUT FLEXIBLE  
FUNDING.

AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL, BUILDING ON THIS FOUNDATION AND  
SECURING THE REMAINDER OF THE FUNDING PACKAGE FROM NON-FEDERAL  
SOURCES.

THIS IS THE STRATEGY LAID OUT IN THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY.

AND THIS IS THE REALITY THAT IS ENABLING CITIES ALL ACROSS OUR LAND TO IMPLEMENT THEIR TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT PROGRAMS.

AND ANOTHER PART OF THIS NEW REALITY IS THAT PROJECTS WITH HIGHER PROPORTIONS OF STATE AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION HAVE A GREATER LIKELIHOOD OF BEING MORE COST EFFICIENT AND COMING IN ON TIME AND UNDER BUDGET.

LOCAL OFFICIALS DO NOT LIKE TO HAVE TO EXPLAIN TO TAXPAYERS THAT PROJECTS ARE OVER BUDGET AND NEED MORE FUNDING.

BUT I'M AFRAID, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT THESE NEW ATTITUDES ARE NOT A REALITY HERE IN THE WASHINGTON AREA WHICH INCLUDES FOUR OF THE WEALTHIEST COUNTIES IN THE COUNTRY.

THIS METROPOLITAN AREA REFUSES TO RECOGNIZE THE NEW REALITY, AND CONTINUES TO ASSUME THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONTRIBUTE 75% OR 80% OF THE TOTAL COST OF METRORAIL CONSTRUCTION.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES IT JUST ISN'T FAIR FOR METRORAIL TO HAVE ITS PROGRAM FUNDED AT A 75% OR 80% FEDERAL SHARE WHEN OTHER CITIES ARE PUTTING UP AS MUCH AS 75% OF TOTAL COSTS WITH NON-FEDERAL FUNDS. EVEN IF THE REMAINING 13.5 MILES ARE CONSTRUCTED WITHOUT ANY FURTHER FEDERAL PARTICIPATION, THE FEDERAL SHARE FOR THE ENTIRE METRORAIL PROJECT WOULD STILL BE 60%.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION SHOULD BE REJECTED.

THAT CONCLUDES MY OPENING STATEMENT. I'LL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER YOUR  
QUESTIONS.

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