

STATEMENT OF RODNEY E. SLATER  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
CONFIRMATION HEARING AS ADMINISTRATOR  
OF THE  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
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Mr. Chairman, Senator Chafee, Members of the Committee, I thank you for quickly scheduling this confirmation hearing and I am honored to appear before you. I look forward to meeting with each member of the Committee and I regret that the busy congressional schedule has prevented me from meeting with all members before this hearing. As a Member and Chairman of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Commission, I am well aware of the significant role this Committee has played in advancing innovative surface transportation initiatives and look forward to working with you in the future to find solutions to moving people and goods in the safest and most expedient manner possible. I am honored that President Clinton has chosen to entrust me with the position of Federal Highway Administrator and if confirmed I look forward to working with Secretary of Transportation Peña.

I am proud to be nominated to head an agency which this year will celebrate 100 years of service to the Nation and to the world - an agency that has built what is described as the greatest public works project in the world and has also assisted other nations with advanced technology in road building and related efforts. In thinking about the responsibilities that lie ahead for the next Federal Highway Administrator, I have looked

at the agency's history and what the country has become in the past 100 years. Certainly, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and its predecessor agencies have played a critical role in the economic growth of the Nation by providing a system of improved highways which has advanced the Nation's growth, wealth, and its interstate commerce. As an attorney, it interests me that the genesis for the Federal-aid Highway Program is derived from the U.S. Constitution. Article I, Section 8 grants to the Congress the power to provide for the "general welfare," and expressly authorizes the Congress to establish post roads. These two clauses underlie the Federal government's work of building postal roads and "getting the farmer out of the mud."

The first federally-aided road appears to have been Zane's Trace. On May 16, 1796, the Congress approved Col. Ebenezer Zane's request to build a post road through the territory northwest of the Ohio River to the river port in what is now Maysville, Kentucky. This request was approved with the stipulation that Zane establish and operate ferries on the three rivers crossed by the road. Zane's Trace was used by boatmen who had navigated downriver, some as far as New Orleans, and who were returning upriver over land. This was only the beginning. Over the years, Federal commitment to our Nation's roads continued to increase, with the first Federal highway program signed into law on March 29, 1806, by our Nation's third President, Thomas Jefferson.

Growing up in the rural Arkansas Delta region near a Louisiana Purchase Survey Marker, I learned that one of the purposes of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase was to connect the East and the West. Not only did it accomplish that, it also doubled the size of the United States and spawned the region's major cities. Thomas Jefferson realized that to reap the benefits of this vast expanse required what we would refer to today as "intermodal connectors." Jefferson, before he completed the Louisiana Purchase, spoke of such enterprises, saying,

I experience great satisfaction at seeing my country proceed to facilitate the intercommunications of its several parts by opening rivers, canals and roads. How much more rational is this disposal of public money, than that of waging war.

In 1956, the Federal Bureau of Public Roads assumed a much greater national role with the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The Act provided funding to complete financing of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, which had been designated by Congress in 1947. The Act also created the Highway Trust Fund as the financing mechanism.

I grew up during the beginning years of the Interstate era. Throughout my life, I have seen this system dominate transportation philosophy, policy, and practices. The Interstate System makes it possible for Americans to engage in ever more productive commercial pursuits, to travel easily and quickly throughout our vast country, and to work with one another as members of a national community. This System is the central tie

that binds our many communities, towns, cities, and States as a Nation.

The European Community is now confronting this issue - looking for a central tie to make the Community one commercial unit. Without an infrastructure system to link the many markets of Europe, the countries of the European Community may be unable to reap the benefits of their economic union. Consequently, Europe is considering a transportation system similar to our Interstate System. While some might argue against the dominant role that highways traditionally have had in the United States, few would dispute that the Interstate System has been enormously successful in facilitating the commercial development of our Nation. If it were not in place, we would be building it right now. Therefore, I am thankful for the foresight of those who have gone before us. Today, however, we are called to deal creatively with the Interstate System; to enhance it as a transportation resource. I believe the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) creates an atmosphere within which these considerations can be addressed in a dynamic, intellectual, and stimulating environment.

This Committee was largely responsible for formulating and advancing the ISTEA, legislation which revolutionized transportation decisionmaking in almost the same manner as the Louisiana Purchase served as a catalyst for the development of our great Nation. The ISTEA has been termed "landmark" legislation, as was the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. I

personally believe that the ISTEA can go down in history as the more significant "landmark" Act, and I am committed to work with the Congress in seeing that it is properly implemented.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who played a key role in formulating the ISTEA, stated in a 1960 article assessing the newly established Interstate System - "roads can make or break a Nation." As I read his article "New Roads and Urban Chaos," I asked myself and officials of the Federal Highway Administration how the ISTEA can cause our highways to better fulfill their role as the "central link" in an intermodal transportation network; how can we ensure that highways are a 21st century program? Certainly, I believe that under the ISTEA, it can no longer be "business as usual."

Throughout this statement I will make many references to the importance of intermodalism, but that is not to be interpreted to mean that I am not mindful of the singular importance of the Federal-aid Highway Program. Highway travel dominates personal and freight transportation. Over 90 percent of all trips to work, and a similar percentage of all personal trips, whatever the purpose, occur on roads. Virtually every product we buy travels by road at some point on its journey to our home. At the national level, I believe we must continue to ensure the strategic investment in roads that are critical for interstate and interregional travel and commerce.

President Clinton has called on us to "Rebuild America." To me that means that FHWA must serve as a mechanism which brings to

the fore creative ideas and fresh thinking while achieving the laudatory goals Congress established in the ISTEA. We must create those links that create a truly intermodal national transportation system. We must rank our investments in order of priority, and protect and improve our various transportation infrastructures. Because many of today's transportation problems require intermodal solutions, transportation planners and local officials must better understand how actions directed at one mode affect other modes and overall system performance. I am committed to finding intermodal solutions to transportation problems. If that means new ways of doing business must be devised, I will devise them. If it means taking controversial actions, I will take them. And certainly, I intend to work cooperatively with Secretary Peña, my modal counterparts, and with this Committee in determining the best way to carry out the spirit and the intent of ISTEA.

The President's Rebuild America initiative calls for important investments in this Nation's infrastructure:

- Full funding of the ISTEA, which could create 14,000 new jobs in 1994, and about 150,000 over a four year period, just on projects designed to improve and maintain the Nation's transportation infrastructure;
- Accelerating "smart cars, smart highways" through the Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Systems (IVHS) program, which I will address further;

- Increased funding for investment in magnetic levitation (Maglev) and high speed rail transportation systems to meet the needs of several of the Nation's high-density corridors;
- Grants to States for alcohol-related highway safety measures and increased use of safety belts and motorcycle helmets; and
- Greater investments in public lands highways and Indian reservation roads.

Secretary Peña has set forth five key themes for his efforts which build on the President's goals to stimulate the economy, to invest in the future, and to reduce the deficit. I would look to these themes in developing plans for the FHWA. The Secretary's themes are:

- Strengthening Transportation's Role in Supporting the Economy;
- Supporting the Safety of our Transportation Systems;
- Strengthening the Linkage Between Transportation and Environmental Policy;
- Advancing U.S. Transportation Technology and Expertise; and
- Fostering Intermodalism.

Having been nominated to be the Federal Highway Administrator, I see it as my responsibility to do what I can to ensure that the Nation's highways make their contribution to achieving the President's policy goals and Secretary Peña's objectives. That does not necessarily mean more and bigger roads. It means that I want to make sure that highways are as

efficient, safe, and responsive to the Nation's transportation needs as it may be in my power to make them.

Briefly, let me set forth my personal thoughts on how the FHWA could assist in a team effort to carry out these aims.

1. **Strengthening Transportation's Role in Supporting the Economy.** A commitment to infrastructure investment is strongly related to economic growth and productivity. Transportation provides an essential foundation for the national economy since nearly all the essentials of modern life are delivered over the transportation system. With the Federal government and many State governments faced with budget deficits, the idea of injecting millions of dollars into programs such as highways may not be appealing to everyone. Nevertheless, businesses, as well as individuals, are paying the price when those public functions are placed lower on our list of pressing priorities. These are issues which I believe the public intuitively understands, although it often takes a crisis to galvanize the public's thinking and to make its needs clear. The potential damage to our business communities and standard of living is too great to risk. It will take strong leadership and political will at all levels of government to take the initiative necessary to foster responsible public actions. If we can keep in mind transportation's basic role, serving the economy and our citizens' quality of life, we can develop public programs which will ensure that the basic infrastructure investments are made. At a minimum, putting these infrastructure investments in place

will ensure that transportation does not constrain private sector productivity growth. At best, it will stimulate full use of what our industries have to offer.

The Interstate System is the backbone of our Nation's highway system, but it alone cannot adequately serve modern surface transportation demand. Changes in the nature of international competition, our industrial strengths, and our economic geography have changed the shape of transportation demand. As a principal component of the Nation's surface transportation system, the National Highway System (NHS) will focus Federal investment on those highway routes critical to national productivity and international competitiveness. Intermodal transfer facilities (including international airports and major shipping ports) crucial to interstate and regional commerce and travel are at the heart of an interconnected NHS. Only through facilitating efficient interregional movements will we be able to provide a high level service to major centers of economic activity and population that are not directly served by the Interstate System but are critical to American industry.

2. Supporting the Safety of our Transportation Systems. Since its creation, the primary responsibility of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to the users of the Nation's highway systems has been to ensure and promote transportation safety. I believe the FHWA has never lost sight of this most important mission. I am sure that safety research will address the DOT goal of continuing to cut the fatality rate below the current

level (1.76 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled) through the next decade, even in the face of increasing travel. I hope to contribute to this positive trend by enhancing safety through a number of DOT's broad-based initiatives, such as the commercial drivers license program, stricter drug and alcohol enforcement, designation of high speed rail corridors to eliminate hazards of rail crossings, and an enhanced Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program.

Special highway safety funds are provided by the ISTEA through a 10 percent set-aside of STP funds. These funds may be used to eliminate safety hazards on existing highways, improve the safety of rail-highway crossings, provide corridor and community safety programs, and develop safety management systems. Through this funding flexibility, the ISTEA encourages innovative, efficient, and effective activities that provide the greatest safety benefits.

3. Strengthening the Linkage Between Transportation and Environmental Policy. Including environmental considerations in every aspect of agency decisionmaking should be a major goal of the FHWA. Major policy development efforts should be pursued with environmental considerations clearly in focus, such as the proposed new rules for metropolitan and statewide planning, which include mechanisms to assure that environmental factors are evaluated at the very earliest stages of transportation planning through active coordination with Federal, State, and local environmental resource agencies. The FHWA should take the lead

on improving project development processes to provide an effective way of structuring the sharing of decisions between the FHWA, as a funding agency, and the variety of Federal agencies which have environmental review and permitting responsibilities. Moreover, the FHWA should timely pursue its new authority under the ISTEA to finance environmental work, such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement projects, transportation enhancements, wetland conservation planning and mitigation banking. Finally, the FHWA should evaluate the environmental implications of new initiatives, such as IVHS development. In all of its environmental work, the FHWA should employ an unprecedented level of coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and with other Federal agencies with environmental responsibilities.

4. Advancing U.S. Transportation Technology and Expertise. The Nation's transportation technology is critical to the economy of the country as well as to our foreign competitiveness. I believe that the FHWA, cooperating with business, academia, and other governments, can advance a research and technology program to meet current and future transportation needs. This requires innovation, advanced technology, and expanded partnerships among the diverse organizations that have a stake in the future of transportation. Infrastructure research will continue to develop tools and materials to rebuild, strengthen, and preserve the U.S. highway system.

Research, of course, needs to be complemented by technology transfer in all areas of highway technology. I think that a primary effort within the FHWA's technology transfer program should be to identify and assess innovative results that hold potential for alleviating problems generated by current and future system demands. Priority technology items should be packaged and delivered to the end user by the most appropriate media to facilitate rapid and widespread application throughout the highway industry. Training, including advanced technical courses, should be used to effectively implement changes resulting from advances in technology as well as to address needs related to a shrinking and changing highway work force. International technology transfer efforts should include identification of new technologies and innovations that will help the United States improve and advance its highway transportation systems.

New safety solutions discovered through research can be coordinated and developed in parallel with the goals of the IVHS program and in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in areas of joint responsibility and interest. The IVHS program, a prime example of a program to advance U.S. transportation technology and expertise, will improve the mobility, safety, and productivity of our Nation's highway transportation system. The program includes major private industry involvement and advancements for motor vehicles

coupled with major government involvement for compatible highway enhancements to achieve its objectives.

5. Fostering Intermodalism. I would support FHWA efforts to continue to foster intermodal cooperation both within the agency and in joint activities with other modal administrations. I understand that six model State intermodal transportation planning grants will be completed and showcased to other localities across the Nation to encourage and promote the development of a national intermodal transportation system that will move people and goods in an energy-efficient manner. I will certainly support outreach efforts such as this. Also, I would encourage the FHWA to utilize the results of a series of regional workshops on Intermodal Transportation Planning and Management Systems being held around the country to provide a greater awareness of the necessity for States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to address intermodal issues. The FHWA should assist in the development of transportation plans that include intermodal components to provide for the efficient movement of both people and goods.

With regard to activities involving other modal agencies, I recommend that the FHWA work jointly with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Maritime Administration (MARAD), the new Bureau of Transportation Statistics, and the Office of Intermodalism. As examples, the FHWA should:

- Continue its efforts with the FRA on the elimination of high speed railroad-highway crossing hazards throughout the United States;
- Pursue the National Bicycling and Walking Study in which intermodal trips which involve walking or bicycling to a transit station will be encouraged with the help of the FTA;
- Cooperate with the FAA on airport access planning; and
- Work with MARAD on efficient goods movements at ports and other transfer points.

I will work for a team approach (both within the FHWA and with other DOT agencies) in addressing intermodal issues to enhance the FHWA's ability to participate with its public and private partners in the development of a balanced transportation system in which the most efficient mechanisms for transporting people and goods can be provided. By working closely with its intermodal partners, the FHWA can provide technical expertise and become more responsive to the needs of the other team members.

Briefly, I would like to address just a few of the issues that I will need to explore with the Committee if I am confirmed.

#### National Highway Systems (NHS)

I see the National Highway System created by the ISTEA as the backbone of the Nation's intermodal system and the tie to bind a seamless intermodal transportation network to serve our Nation and its citizens in the 21st century. I am committed to working with the States and the Congress on the designation of the best system possible within the parameters of the

legislation. The purpose of the NHS is to provide an interconnected system of principal arterial routes which will serve major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, intermodal transportation facilities, and major travel destinations; to meet national defense requirements; and to serve interstate and interregional travel.

Congress authorized a proposed 155,000-mile network of principal arterials, plus or minus 15 percent. The entire Interstate System will be included, so the easy part is the first 45,000 or so miles--the 42,795 miles built under the Interstate Highway Program and a further 2,200 miles built with other funds and then added to the Interstate System. The ISTEA also identified a series of high-priority multi-State corridors, totalling about 4,500 miles, that are to be included as well--for example, Kansas City to Shreveport, St. Louis to St. Paul, and Indianapolis to Houston. Finally, the NHS will include a system of highways, called the Strategic Highway Corridor Network, that the Department of Defense has identified to provide defense access, continuity, and emergency capabilities for movements of personnel and equipment in peacetime and wartime.

That totals about 67,000 miles. Beyond that, the slate is clean and I am anxious to work with State and local officials to fill in the blanks. Factors to be considered in NHS selection are multi-State corridors, State connectivity, relationship to

the Interstate System, rural/urban connectivity, border crossings with Canada and Mexico, and access to major ports.

The FHWA asked the States to submit their proposed NHS routes by the end of April of this year. The FHWA will begin defining the Federal proposal to ensure that the NHS reflects the national interest in an intermodal transportation network. If I am confirmed, I will take an active role in this process. By December 18, 1993, the ISTEA requires the FHWA to submit the completed proposal to the Congress for approval. The agency intends to meet that deadline and I, too, am committed to meeting that deadline if I am confirmed. The Congress has given itself a deadline of September 30, 1995, for approving the proposal. If it does not approve the NHS, the FHWA is prohibited from apportioning funds to the States after that date--the last day of fiscal year 1995--for the NHS or for Interstate maintenance.

I would like to think that things will go smoothly and that the NHS will be approved in plenty of time. Nevertheless, we have to consider the possibility that it may not be approved. After all, some Members of Congress were skeptical of the concept. Many environmental and some other groups think the highway era is over and that we should put the money into other modes of transportation, principally rail and transit. It will be up to us to demonstrate that if America wants to remain economically strong, if America wants to compete with other countries in a global marketplace, if we want to move goods and people efficiently, and if we want our standard of living to

continue to grow, then we must invest in the NHS. Certainly our principal economic competitors in the world, nations such as Germany and Japan, have poured vast resources into their highway systems over the last few years and are now reaping even greater economic rewards from those investments.

I believe that the NHS is based on a sound concept that will produce significant benefits for our country. These benefits will directly relate to several factors that support the concept of an NHS, namely:

- o Benefits to economic growth;
- o Intermodal connectivity and trade corridors;
- o System connectivity;
- o Commercial vehicle use;
- o Expanded trade among Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.;
- o Travel and tourism;
- o Safety;
- o Congestion relief;
- o System performance; and
- o Environmental considerations.

Finally, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been the recent focus of Congressional hearings and much political discussion. The NHS goals, to me, would seem to coincide with the goals of the NAFTA and the expansion of trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

## HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

I am aware of the concerns of the Congress over the status and fiscal condition of the Highway Trust Fund based on findings of the recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report. I want to work with the Congress in developing recommendations to assure that the Highway Trust Fund remains secure. I would consult with this Committee and the Congress on any further actions the President takes on increasing investments in surface transportation in order to stimulate the economy. I am committed to the President's intent to fully fund the ISTEA highway program.

## IVHS

In discussing the NHS, I suggested that it is a crucial part of the grand intermodal transportation plan. A far more imaginative intermodal venture, however, is the Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Systems (IVHS) public-private partnership. IVHS offers us a great challenge for the future: To reach beyond the limits of highways and carry IVHS technology to all forms of surface transportation.

President Clinton has laid out a plan for bold comprehensive change not only to make our economy once again an engine of general prosperity, but to reinforce our leadership in world markets. That plan includes an overall investment, incentive, and deficit reduction strategy as well as an aggressive technology initiative. I commend the President's support for increased funding for IVHS. The FHWA budget calls for an

increase of \$214 million for IVHS, or 48 percent more than the FY 93 level. We plan to invest \$923 million over four years. This increased funding will allow IVHS products to reach the marketplace faster, providing early benefits to users of the transportation system.

With the Intelligent Vehicle Highway Society of America (IVHS AMERICA), and other new partners, I believe that the United States can lead the world in this technology, increasing our nation's productivity and competitiveness.

The Administration views IVHS technology as not only improving traffic control and warning drivers of dangerous situations, but making better use of existing transportation infrastructure. I share the vision of an IVHS that combines state-of-the-art communications, warning systems, electronic displays, and computer technology. This combination will lead to "smart" fare cards and toll cards and information and communications systems that create seamless intermodal links. It may also produce advances in other areas, such as artificial intelligence and defense-related technologies.

In addition, these new technologies will be an enormous boost to our economy and will open up world markets for the new systems and products. With each new development will come new, high wage, permanent jobs and a stronger U.S. economy.

One IVHS strategy is to establish a National Commercial Vehicle Network that uses advanced technologies to increase the safety and productivity of the motor carrier industry. In this

network, trucks will be able to travel on highways without stopping at State borders and weigh stations. Vital safety and regulatory checks can be made through the use of these technologies, automatically, and without delays. The productivity gains for the trucking industry from this one IVHS technology will be phenomenal.

In addition, the IVHS Corridors Program holds great promise for benefiting all who travel on our Nation's highways, but especially commuters. Under the Corridors Program, the Department of Transportation has designated four locations as priority corridors to further the goals of the national IVHS program. In the northeast, a large section of I-95 recently was designated from Maryland to Connecticut as a priority corridor. An array of IVHS projects aimed at improving traffic flow and traveler mobility, as well as improving air quality, will be implemented in the priority corridors. These sites will become national test beds for IVHS and the basis for the establishment of an IVHS infrastructure. In many cases, the priority corridors will be where the public is first introduced to new IVHS services and technologies.

Several weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend the Third Annual Meeting of IVHS AMERICA, and came away very impressed with the sense of excitement, opportunity, and genuine enthusiasm expressed by the participants. IVHS AMERICA brings together a rich mixture of public and private sector officials to exchange

ideas, foster close working partnerships, and develop plans and programs to achieve the IVHS vision.

While at the meeting, I had the opportunity to test drive a prototype car to be used in the "ADVANCE" project. About 5,000 of these vehicles, which provide automated navigation and route guidance through dash-mounted color video screens and audio, will be put into service in the Chicago area. There, they will serve to evaluate technical and driver-related issues. This project follows up on the recently-completed "TravTek" project which tested similar concepts with 100 automobiles in Orlando, Florida. The evaluation phase of the Orlando project is now underway, but the extensive press coverage of the one-year test created a lot of excitement over these technologies.

Also while at the IVHS AMERICA meeting, I visited the large number of exhibits which were sponsored by manufacturing firms, associations, consulting firms, and others. I was very impressed by the scope and depth of private sector participation. This partnering of private firms with the public sector is one hallmark of the IVHS program, as demonstrated by operational tests such as ADVANCE and TravTek.

The Rebuild America proposal will accelerate the benefits of those elements of the IVHS program I have just mentioned. I commend the Committee's foresight in moving the IVHS program forward as part of the ISTEA legislation. Your support has enabled this program to flourish, and the FHWA and the Department

are working very hard with their partners in the States, localities, and the private sector to deliver the IVHS program.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

One of my first visits to the FHWA after being nominated by President Clinton was to the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center in Virginia. I realize that a large Federal investment has been made in the facility and I believe its efforts will certainly support the general concept of the ISTEA in research.

Further, I believe that the FHWA research programs are consistent with the Rebuild America initiative on revitalizing technology. Hopefully, this research will create markets that encourage the use of defense technology for civilian purposes. I am told that the facility is shared with other DOT modes and I would encourage intermodal cooperation in all FHWA research efforts.

#### ISTEA AND THE CLEAN AIR ACT

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, together with the ISTEA, call for significant changes in the way we go about meeting transportation and air-quality goals. I support coordinated efforts in order to achieve both of those goals. I believe that the ISTEA complements the Clean Air Act by providing funding and giving State and local transportation officials the flexibility to use it in ways that will help us develop a balanced, environmentally sound, intermodal transportation system.

The Clean Air Act requires that transportation plans and projects conform to air-quality plans, otherwise Federal-aid projects may not proceed. I am committed to working with Secretary Peña and the EPA on the conformity rules and the new programs to help fund transportation control measures and other projects intended to help meet air-quality standards in nonattainment areas.

#### TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS

I agree with the many observers of the ISTEA who consider the transportation enhancements program as one of its most exciting new provisions. The program gives States new tools and new mandates to make highways better neighbors. I have read with interest of the many States and localities that are taking advantage of new innovative funding for transportation enhancements. I believe that healthy new partnerships are forming and that these projects are building tremendous good will for State transportation agencies. If I am confirmed, I will encourage the use of transportation enhancements to complement transportation projects environmentally.

#### BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS (BTS)

The implementation of the BTS has basically been left by the outgoing Administration to the discretion of the new Administration. I am committed to working with Secretary Peña on this effort. I see it as a very useful tool in transportation decisionmaking and I am interested in being a part of a dialogue

between the new Director when appointed, the Department of Transportation, and congressional members and staff.

#### DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

One FHWA program in which I am very interested is the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. I want to compliment the FHWA on its early role in putting a DBE program into effect. I come from a State that has always exceeded the DBE set-aside goal and that also has a DBE requirement for State work. I am pleased that the Department of Transportation has released new proposed DBE regulations which I want to consider. Some of my personal concerns with the program, which I think warrants review, include the graduation rates of DBEs and DBE bonding problems. I think that FHWA technical assistance to States to provide supportive services could enhance the program. I compliment this Committee and the Congress for putting the initial DBE program into law.

#### SAFETY

I realize that one of the FHWA's principal obligations is to promote transportation safety. I was pleased to see that the Nation's highway fatality rate had fallen by 1992 to 1.76 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, an all time low. I am committed to implementing all the safety programs that the FHWA carries out, including the very successful Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program, and to work closely with FHWA's sister agency, NHTSA, on safety issues.

The ISTEA provided a penalty or transfer provision to encourage States to enact motorcycle helmet and safety-belt-use laws. The Secretary has announced his intention to see that the mandatory safety belt and helmet laws of the ISTEA are implemented. If the penalty-transfers become necessary, I would see that the ISTEA's mandates are carried out. I am pleased to note that my home State of Arkansas has passed both the seat belt and the helmet laws.

#### CONCLUSION

I would like to thank this Committee for the consideration it has extended to me, and I thank Secretary Peña and President Clinton for the confidence they have placed in me.

I am ready for the challenge of serving as Federal Highway Administrator. With other modal Administrators and transportation officials, I believe I can serve as a strong transportation advocate. I have a background of varied experiences which will be of benefit. I have had to work with many diverse groups and balance a variety of competing interests.

During the Presidential campaign, I traveled with candidate Clinton across the entire country. The experience provided me with my first opportunity to see most of this vast country - to behold its beauty, to witness its diversity, and to fathom its potential. It opened my eyes to the range of transportation alternatives as we traveled by water taxi in San Diego and by train from Philadelphia to New York, as we motored on the famous bus tours through middle America and as we flew across the

country in the closing 29 hours of the campaign to nine cities in eight States. This travel odyssey certainly sharpened my focus on the importance of transportation in America.

I look forward to joining an agency with a history of 100 years of exemplary professional service. I would be proud to follow in the footsteps of dedicated civil servants, such as Bertram D. Tallamy, the first Senate-confirmed Federal Highway Administrator, and Francis C. Turner, a career highway engineer who rose to become the first Federal Highway Administrator in the newly created Department of Transportation.

Again, I wish to thank this Committee for the expeditious consideration of my nomination.