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Southern California Earthquake Hearing
chaired by Senator Dianne Feinstein
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DOT Earthquake Relief Efforts

"When the earth shook and the fires raged in California, when I saw the Mississippi deluge the farmlands of the midwest in a 500-year flood, when the century's bitterest cold swept from North Dakota to Newport News, it seemed as though the world itself was coming apart at the seams, but the American people just came together. They rose to the occasion, neighbor helping neighbor, strangers risking life and limb to save total strangers, showing the better angels of our nature. Let us not reserve the better angels of our nature only for natural disasters."

Senator Feinstein, Mayor Riordan, ladies and gentlemen, it is my belief that these words of President Clinton capture the essence of the people of Los Angeles, California, and the Nation in responding to the quake that occurred on January 17th. Everywhere I went in California I came across what I can only describe as heroic efforts to move forward and deal with the ravages of the earthquake.

On January 17, as the Nation paused to pay tribute to a fallen American hero, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the earth shook. Today, as we gather on the anniversary of Dr. King's death, to review what we have done to date to respond to one of our Nation's severest disasters, we can see that, after all the loss and suffering that virtually shook the confidence of the State, we have pulled together to rebuild. I am reminded of Dr. King's words, "There is within human nature an amazing potential for goodness."

Secretary Peña and I, in our many meetings with community leaders and citizens, have seen this goodness firsthand, in the public and private sector partnership that has brought us far since that critical day of the quake.

- Before nightfall on the day of the quake, Secretary Peña, FAA Administrator David Hinson, the Secretary's Chief of Staff, other DOT staff members, and I arrived in Los Angeles early enough to fly over the damage area, review the major damage sites, and speak with concerned State and local officials.
- At a meeting in the Mayor's office the day we arrived, we talked with the Mayor and his staff and consulted with the Governor by phone to identify California's most critical needs and determine how best to address them.
- Before night fell, we were able to let four contracts to begin debris removal and other demolition work necessary before reconstruction efforts could begin.
- By mid-week when the President arrived, work was fully underway and apparent to all.
- By the end of the week, seven of the nine major damage sites were completely cleared and within 12 days of the quake the first reconstruction contract was let on the Gavin Canyon I-5 stretch, scheduled for completion by June 7.
- On February 4, the Santa Monica Freeway contract was let, and the work is scheduled to be completed in 140 days, by the end of June.
- On February 10, the contract to repair the eastbound section of S.R. 118 was awarded; the target completion date is May 21.
- All of these jobs are either progressing on schedule or ahead of schedule, and all will be completed within 180 days of the quake and therefore funded with 100 percent Federal funds.
- Less than a month following the quake, and after hours of debate, the Congress approved the Administration's emergency supplemental appropriations request. Of the \$10 billion provided in the act, \$1.35 billion was directly allocated for transportation activities. An estimated \$0.5 billion was included in FEMA's

allocation for Mass Transit and local road repair. This Congressional action reflected the will of the American people to come to the aid of those in need.

This outstanding level of performance by all branches and levels of government, community and business leaders, and private citizens has been the achievement of a true partnership effort.

It has been eleven weeks since the earthquake hit the Los Angeles area. As you can see, we have been working diligently during that time with California's State and community leaders in a joint effort to speed recovery work. There has been great progress made in this vital effort: reconstruction work is underway on all major freeways, and transportation detours and alternative transportation measures have eased the commuting nightmare that resulted from damaged transportation facilities. The limited repairs necessary to ensure the continued operation of other modes of transportation, such as railroad lines, transit vehicles, and airports, have been successfully completed. Los Angeles is rebounding with renewed energy.

The earthquake, although obviously having the greatest impact on the Los Angeles metropolitan area, underscores the strategic importance of the proposed National Highway System (NHS) to the Nation as a whole. NHS routes comprise 4 percent of the Nation's public roads yet carry 40 percent of our highway traffic and 70 percent of truck freight. The impact of damage to a few critical NHS routes was therefore felt throughout southern California, and indeed, the Nation. Although a number of routes on the proposed NHS were damaged, the majority of routes survived the quake and play an important role in keeping the city moving, whether serving as alternate or detour routes around damaged facilities or linking commuter rail routes, mass transit facilities, ports, and airports.

I can assure you that the Administration remains committed to coordinating the resources provided to respond to this disaster and to get the job done as quickly as possible in partnership with California and the affected communities. President Clinton, Secretary Peña, and I have travelled to Los Angeles numerous times since the earthquake and witnessed firsthand the trauma of its victims. I recognize that, although great efforts have already been made to aid the many victims of the quake, the recovery is far from complete. We will be here until the work is completed.

Senator Feinstein, when Secretary Peña and I spoke with you and Members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee about the recovery efforts at their hearing in January, we described early and immediate actions to restore vital transportation links. We also outlined plans to assist our State and local partners in rebuilding damaged highways and in actively promoting alternative transportation modes. I can report to you today that this effort has been successful. With the timely assistance of Congress in providing emergency funds through the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1994, signed by the President on February 12, many of those plans and proposals have been implemented and their anticipated benefits realized. Additionally, on March 17 the President approved legislation proposed by you, Senator Feinstein, and Senators Boxer and Hatfield, to provide greater flexibility to California and other States in utilizing Federal bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds to seismically retrofit non-deficient bridges.

The Department's Earthquake Relief Efforts

The Department's approach to disaster relief has forged a partnership with other Federal agencies and State and local communities. Within two hours of the earthquake, the Research and Special Programs Administration had the Crisis Management Center in DOT headquarters up and running, implementing our immediate assistance functions under the Federal Response Plan. An Emergency Transportation Relief Task Force was quickly established to ensure a coordinated response for all transportation measures. The Department's approach is also proactive; a key goal is to ensure that goods and people are able to move quickly and efficiently, and thereby help minimize further harm to the California economy.

Within 48 hours of the quake, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) quickly approved an initial allocation of \$15 million in Emergency Relief funds to meet California's immediate needs for debris clearance and demolition on Federal-aid highways. To date, \$350 million in highway Emergency Relief funds have been approved.

In addition to addressing the problems of the damage to Los Angeles' infrastructure, we also urged people in communities affected by the earthquake, including DOT employees, to consider transportation alternatives, including public transit, commuter rail, buses, and carpooling, as well as alternate work arrangements such as telecommuting (flexiplace), compressed work schedules, and flexible work schedules. On February 9, the Secretary sent letters to each cabinet secretary and Federal agency head, requesting that each of them ask their employees in the Los Angeles area to also support alternate means of transportation and alternate work arrangements. The letters encouraged Federal agencies to utilize the transit benefits program (providing for up to \$60 per month per employee) and to encourage employees to commute to and from work by other than single occupancy vehicles. Many responses have been received by the Department indicating support for the Secretary's requests. We will continue to advocate these transportation alternatives in the hope that our efforts result in lasting change in commuting behavior.

We are working with Caltrans, affected cities, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and Metrolink (1) to increase capacity on these alternative systems by providing additional trains and park and ride lots, building temporary Metrolink stations, and adding more buses and downtown

shuttle service, and (2) to promote a major outreach campaign aimed at commuters to let them know they have transportation choices.

Before the earthquake, Metrolink was carrying 10,000 people a day. In the weeks immediately following the quake, ridership peaked at 31,000 commuters. This figure has now stabilized at 18,000 riders per day. That is the kind of response that will help L.A. recover from this disaster.

The Department is committed to speeding turnaround times for funding approvals, implementing innovative contracting procedures, and providing other forms of regulatory relief designed to cut highway repair times. An innovative form of competitive low bid contracting, called the "Cost Plus Time" or "A+B" approach, combined with the use of incentive and disincentive clauses, was approved for use for contracts to repair and replace critically damaged structures as quickly as possible. This approach permits the bidder to establish its contract time and encourages the completion of work in the shortest practical period. It works as follows:

- CALTRANS develops a short list of qualified contractors.
- For each contract, CALTRANS selects three contractors from the list and allows them up to 72 hours to submit their bids. The contracts are developed using the A+B approach, where A is the dollar amount of the work to be performed and B is the number of calendar days required to complete the project. A value of time is used for quantifying the number of days in dollar terms. Both incentive (I) and disincentive (D) provisions are included.
- The contract is awarded to the contractor submitting the lowest responsive bid.

Using this method of contracting permits damaged facilities to be returned to use in record time. For example, the Gavin Canyon-Interstate 5 bridges are planned to be rebuilt in only 130 days, and the I-10 bridges in 140 days. The incentive clauses may induce the contractors to finish even earlier. Under standard contracting procedures, the reconstruction of bridges of these types would take many months longer.

Last week, I had the opportunity to inspect the reconstruction projects at Gavin Canyon on I-5 and on the Santa Monica Freeway. I met with the contractors on these projects and I must relay

to you how impressed I am with the work they are doing. I believe CALTRANS will provide you with a more detailed status report of repairs to highways and bridges.

In all contracting efforts, we remain committed to maximizing the opportunities for minority and women owned business enterprises as we carry out the disaster and other federal-aid work in California. With an achievement rate of about 38 percent, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation in the Los Angeles earthquake clean up and repair work takes the program to new and higher levels; this was about \$15 million in DBE contracts. In addition, the Department has shown financial commitment to the bonding assistance and short term lending program. DOT has targeted \$2 million for the lending program for working capital and \$3 million for the DBE bonding program for Los Angeles. To date, this special initiative for the L.A. disaster efforts has resulted in the issuance of 3 bid/payment/performance bonds for \$770,000 in contracts and have qualified one DBE as bond ready for over \$1.0 million in contracts. Seven loans have been approved for over \$2.1 million. The FHWA is providing technical and financial assistance through its DBE Supportive Service program to CALTRANS to assist DBEs that want to participate in the lending and bonding programs. FHWA has approved an additional \$500,000 through our annual allocation of DBE Supportive Services money to help fund a statewide bonding effort.

Traffic management is essential to minimize the disruption in the movement of people and goods throughout the Los Angeles area. Following the quake, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes were striped to establish priority for vehicles carrying at least 2 people. On the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10), the average travel time through the quake-damaged section of the corridor was 30 minutes; before the quake, this same trip took only 6 minutes. The HOV lane on I-10 has reduced the half-hour travel time of carpoolers, vanpoolers, and bus riders by one-third. I understand that this HOV lane is working so well that HOV usage has now more than doubled since late January.

The Santa Monica Freeway is also the site of an advanced Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Systems\traffic management project called the "Smart Corridor." The objectives of the project are to relieve congestion, help prevent accidents, reduce fuel consumption, and improve air quality. To accomplish this, the project uses advanced technology to advise travelers of current highway

conditions and alternate routes with changeable message signs and highway advisory radio.

Another traffic management measure that has played a significant role in minimizing the traffic disruption resulting from the quake is the Los Angeles Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control System (ATSAC). The ATSAC system is a computerized traffic control system which automatically adjusts signal timing plans to reflect changing traffic conditions, locates signal equipment malfunctions, and identifies and responds to unusual traffic conditions. In operation in Los Angeles for almost 10 years, the ATSAC system covers over 1200 intersections, including those in the Santa Monica corridor. The ATSAC system has been invaluable in the weeks following the quake -- enabling city streets to accommodate the unusually heavy volumes of traffic detoured from damaged freeways.

Not only does the Department respond in the short term with immediate assistance after a natural disaster, we also have programs that address the long term, *i.e.*, earthquake preparedness. We continue to aggressively explore ways to reduce the long range seismic vulnerability of our Nation's transportation system. For example, the Department has established a Long Range Seismic Safety Program. One objective is to enhance seismic awareness among transportation managers who may not be fully aware of the degree to which their systems may be vulnerable to seismic damage. The Department has developed a primer that introduces transportation managers to the concepts of seismic safety and risk reduction.

The DOT has also issued regulations establishing seismic design requirements for DOT-sponsored new buildings. DOT and other agencies are developing a program to guide the retrofit of existing government buildings. In addition, the FHWA has been conducting research on seismic design and retrofit for over 20 years, exploring how to make highways less vulnerable to earthquakes. We are also cooperating with CALTRANS for the conduct of a \$500,000 forensic research study so that lessons learned from this earthquake can rapidly improve engineering practice. The Department's National Highway Institute at the Turner Fairbank Highway Research Center offers several courses to State departments of transportation in the areas of seismic design of highway bridges and foundations. A new course is currently under development in the application of retrofit practices to a wide variety of structure designs.

Conclusion

January's earthquake, in crippling the transportation system throughout the Los Angeles area, served as a sharp reminder of the vulnerability of our infrastructure to natural disasters and of the need to do everything we can to increase our preparedness for such events. One lesson we learned from this quake is that the damage to the transportation network in one region can have far-reaching consequences due to the national significance of the routes that were damaged. Because all of the major routes damaged by the quake are on the proposed National Highway System, they serve as critical links between several different transportation modes in the area and also between California and the rest of the Nation. When these routes were damaged, commerce throughout the Nation felt the blow, in terms of shipping delays and increased costs. The economic effects of the earthquake will be felt long after the debris is cleared, and the reconstruction of damaged homes, businesses, and highways is underway. Therefore we must continue to employ the tools that we have used so successfully in these weeks immediately following the quake, such as increased use of public transportation, carpools, and telecommuting.

We also learned that seismic retrofitting works, yet we realize that no man-made structure can be earthquake-proof. Fortunately, none of the bridges in the Los Angeles area that were fully retrofitted failed or suffered major damage as a result of this earthquake. Finally, we learned that the Federal Response Plan works. When we cooperate as a team with State and local governments, we are most successful in restoring essential transportation services.

Senator Feinstein, Mr. Mayor, and distinguished panel members, the last major aftershock on March 20 reminds us that our Federal, State, and local "team" must be ever vigilant to possible future disasters here in California, as well as across the Nation. I will leave here this evening on the redeye flight, traveling to Buffalo, New York, to begin a two-week, 14-State, 2000-mile journey along the roadways of America. From Buffalo to Laredo, Texas, and at every stop along the way, I will have the opportunity to hear from the people of the towns and cities visited about the importance of transportation to them. But I will also tell them your story as well -- how, in the face of devastation, the people of southern California would not succumb. Guided by the better angels of their nature, they work together to restore and rebuild their communities and their lives.

I assure you that responding to the California earthquake will continue to be one of the top priorities of President Clinton, as well as for me and my DOT colleagues. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.