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MEMORANDUM

on
THE INTERSTATE SYSTEM IN URBAN AREAS

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The concepts of the Interstate System were developed after years of intensive study. The criteria and standards for the selection of routes on the Interstate System, and, to a great extent, the routes actually designated, were known and endorsed by the Congress as well as the Administration before enactment of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which provided for the completion of the System. The present Interstate highway program extends over some twenty years in its development, and is founded on long and comprehensive congressional and executive study. It did not begin with the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956.

On April 27, 1939, a report entitled "Toll Roads and Free Roads" (House Document 272, 76th Congress, 1st Session) was transmitted to the Congress in response to a congressional directive to study the matter of a select limited system of main highways. This report stated that only about 5 per cent of highway trips exceed 50 miles, and that some 85 per cent were shorter than 20 miles. On page 95 of the report it is stated that "the construction of transcity ~~con-~~nections of the main rural highways and other express routes into the center of the cities ranks first in the list of highway projects worthy of consideration by the Congress."

On January 12, 1944, the President transmitted to the Congress a report of the National Interregional Highway Committee, outlining and recommending a National System of Interregional Highways (House Document 379, 78th Congress, 2d Session). This report, entitled "Interregional Highways" was prepared pursuant to direction of the Congress contained in section 5 of Public Law 146, 78th Congress, and it is the charter, so to speak, for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways as we know it today.

Nearly half of the Interregional Report of 1944 deals with locations and design standards for the system in urban areas. On page 51 of the report it is stated that,

"Whatever other facilities it may provide, the system must incorporate adequate routes leading directly into the larger cities, including at least most of the cities of 10,000 or more population."

On page 4 of the report it is stated, with respect to sections of the recommended system within and in the environs of the larger cities and metropolitan areas, that:

"If priority of improvement within the system be determined by either the magnitude of benefits resulting or the urgency of need, it is to these sections that first attention should be accorded."

On page 56, the report states, in discussing the plans of route selection in cities:

"Once the routes enter the environs of the city, however, they become a part of the sum total of urban transportation facilities, and as such must

bear a proper relation in location and character to other parts of the street system. In addition to the traffic to and from exterior points, they will carry a heavy flow of intraurban movement of which city authorities will have knowledge or will be best able to measure or predict." (emphasis added)

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 provided for the designation of a National System of Interstate Highways not exceeding 40,000 miles in total extent "so located as to connect by routes, as direct as practicable, the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers, to serve the national defense, and to connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance in the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Mexico."

Pursuant to this statute, routes totaling 37,700 miles, including those into and through urban areas, were approved for the Interstate System on August 2, 1947. An additional 2,300 miles of Interstate routes into, through and around urban areas were approved on September 15, 1955, in accordance with criteria for selection of Interstate routes furnished to the Subcommittee on Public Roads of the Senate Committee on Public Works on April 15, 1955, and printed in the hearings of that subcommittee.

During the early part of 1955, two extremely important and comprehensive reports were submitted to the Congress. These were: a report by the Secretary of Commerce entitled "Report on the Needs of the Highway System" (House Document 120, 84th Congress, 1st

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Session) and the report of the President's Advisory Committee on a National Highway Program, usually referred to as the "Clay Committee Report" (House Document 93, 84th Congress, 1st Session). With respect to the report of the Secretary of Commerce, President Eisenhower has stated that "This study made at the direction of the 83rd Congress in the 1954 Federal-Aid Highway Act is the most comprehensive of its kind ever undertaken." With respect to both of the 1955 reports the President stated "These two documents together constitute a most exhaustive examination of the National Highway System, its problems and their remedies. . . . They provide a solid foundation for a sound program."

The Clay Committee report specifically points out and summarizes in the table on page 18 that the additional 2300 miles to be designated should be urban routes and a lump sum of \$4 billion was specifically set up for that purpose, making a total of \$15 billion for urban routes out of the then estimated \$27 billion total cost for the entire system. As a matter of fact the 108(d) estimate of cost submitted to the Congress in 1958 for the completion of the Interstate System indicated only \$15.7 billion as the total cost.

The point is that the increase in cost of the Interstate System is not substantially in the urban areas as being alleged, but in the rural areas.

The following table summarizes the presentations of different reports on the Interstate System in regard to urban costs:

Highway Needs of the National Defense (House Document 249, 81st Congress, page 49)	-----	urban 47 per cent
House Document 120, 84th Congress, pages 6 and 7	-----	urban 46 per cent
Clay Committee Report	-----	urban 55 per cent
1958 108(d) Estimate (House Document 300, 85th Congress)	-----	urban 42 per cent

It is also significant that about one-half of the trust income comes from the highway user in urban areas. Under the present distribution of Federal-aid from the Trust Fund, urban areas receive only 42 per cent of the Interstate program and 25 per cent of the ABC program.

During the latter part of 1955 and the first half of 1956, the Congress gave serious consideration to the Federal-aid highway program. After intensive study and discussion of the information and data before it, including the reports referred to above, the criteria for selection of routes of the Interstate System, and the 40,000 miles of Interstate System routes which had been designated in 1947 and 1955, including routes into, through and around urban areas, the Congress enacted the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. By that Act there was authorized the appropriation of Federal funds for the accelerated completion of the Interstate System, with the specific provision that the funds authorized were available for extensions of the Interstate System through urban areas. (See section 108(b) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956).

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The standards adopted for the construction of Interstate highways, in both urban and rural areas, are in accord with the statutory requirements that the geometric and construction standards for the Interstate System shall be adequate to accommodate the types and volumes of traffic forecast for the year 1975; that the plans and specifications for all Federal-aid projects must provide for a facility that will adequately meet the existing and probable future traffic needs and conditions in a manner conducive to safety, durability, and economy of maintenance, and is designed and constructed to conform to the particular needs of each community; and that local needs, to the extent practicable, suitable, and feasible, shall be given equal consideration with the needs of interstate commerce.