

## Remarks by Ranking Member Mica

Thank you so much, Tom. I'm delighted to be here tonight in this historic room with my partner, my colleague, Chairman Oberstar. He talked about our partnership and always doing things together, always side by side. Although I remember when President Bush vetoed our Water Resources Development Act, Chairman Oberstar laid on his back in a comfortable hospital bed while I had to go to the House Floor alone and override the 107th veto of the President of the United States - my President. It truly is a delight to be here tonight with you, Mr. Chairman, and all of you - former Chairman Roe, my great mentor Chairman Young, so many of our Subcommittee Chairmen and Ranking Members, and staff. Being a former staffer myself, I appreciate all of your efforts and your fine work.

I have to thank also the Capitol Historical Society. One of my fondest memories is from when I first came to Washington and Capitol Hill. I always wanted to be a staffer on the Hill and I came to town when I was working for my national fraternity, which was headquartered in Iowa City, Iowa. I used every excuse I could to try come to Washington and get an interview with a Congressional office. The Congressman from Iowa City, Iowa, in those days was Fred Schwengel. Fred was so kind to me; I still remember he took me to the Members Dining room where we shared some iced tea and a little snack. He told me so much about the history of this place, and I can remember that, folks, like it was yesterday. You know, Fred is really responsible for the founding of the Society. So I remember him fondly tonight as I speak.

We just heard a little bit of history from Mr. Oberstar. He has a great many stories and has been here to see so much history unfold. I wanted to take a few minutes to add a little more, because I'm a little student of history, even though I haven't been here as long as he has. I always thought one of the great themes of reading history and jumping back into the history of Congress, or any aspect of history, is how much we repeat, and how much things really don't change despite the notion that things are changing all the time. So I researched a couple of little things.

For instance, there were other folks here long ago who, like myself, supported public-private partnerships. The first public-private partnership was passed in the first Congress in 1790. It was under the Survey and Publication of Post-Roads. The House of Representatives passed on April 27, 1790 this project described as "a great public as well as private utility." It was actually a plan for the Post Office because in those days the roads were uneven and they didn't have maps to get to the Post Office. It stated, "In the public interest authorized payment for survey and publication of information on routes up to 3,000 miles of funds from the public"- public-private partnership - "at the rate of one-eighth of a dollar per mile." A total of \$375 appropriated in 1790 for the first public-private partnership. Things don't change, folks.

Okay, so we get a little fancier. You heard the Cape Henry Lighthouse story from Mr. Oberstar, but in August 1790, we have one of the first lighthouses in Portland, Maine. It was busting the budget then: \$1500 for this lighthouse in Portland, Maine. So do you know what they did in 1791? Well, you know what we do today - it doesn't change much. In 1791 they included payments for lighthouses and beacons and public piers - under what category? "pensions for invalids." Have things changed?

Then, on to another great project, and here we look at creative financing and some of the ideas that we're struggling with now in how to fund our surface transportation bill. In 1796 we have Ebenezer Zane - he was something of a predecessor in getting federal support for an idea he had to fund ferries and roads. Well, the deal he cut in 1796 was to take 2% of federal land sales

and put it into infrastructure. This really was the predecessor of the Cumberland National Road. We had creative financing in 1796.

There's more, folks. You think that we have our struggles now to get out a major transportation bill? Earlier Mr. Oberstar - and recently even the Congress - recognized Albert Gallatin, who was the Secretary of the Treasury under Thomas Jefferson. Gallatin put together the first comprehensive blueprint for Transportation and Infrastructure. So I looked at a copy of the Gallatin Report from August 12, 1808. Here's the beginning of the transmittal letter from Albert Gallatin: "Sir, I have the honor to transmit a report respecting the roads and canals prepared in obedience to the resolution of the Senate, the second of March, 1807. It has been unavoidably delayed much longer than has been desirable or had been expected." Do things really change, folks?

Finally, to conclude - because I do want to hear Secretary LaHood, and I think most of you came to hear our Secretary and former T&I member who made good. But first I want to continue on the topic that things do not change. Another example is building the Cumberland Road. When it started out, from the time the first section opened in 1813, the Cumberland Road came under traffic so heavy that the stone surface was worn away almost as fast as it was built. "The funds appropriated for maintenance were not sufficient to provide systematic and continual repair, nor to protect the road from depreciations of travelers of local residents. In order to provide a regular and dependable source of funds for maintenance, Congress passed the Act of 1820 authorizing the collection of tolls from road users." Does that sound familiar? Now, listen, it gets better. "President James Monroe vetoed this act as an unwarranted extension of the power vested in Congress to make appropriations," and these are his quotes, "under which power with the consent of states through which the roads pass the work was originally commenced and has so far been executed." "The collection of tolls," the President said, "implied a power of jurisdiction or sovereignty that was not granted to the federal government by the Constitution." That sounds like Ron Paul. I remember when we had our last FAA bill, I asked Ron Paul, "Ron, can you help me, I need a vote on our side to get this through." He said, "What authority do we have under the Constitution to provide for the federal aviation act?" Anyway, getting back to President Monroe, "It could not be unilaterally conveyed to any state without a constitutional amendment. It was one thing to make appropriations for public improvements, but an entirely different matter to assume jurisdiction and sovereignty over the land where those improvements were made." Monroe's veto established the federal position on highway grants that has since endured. This is a little bit of history.

I want to close now for the Secretary's remarks. When in my introduction it was mentioned that Mica was an advocate of high speed rail, I heard three people applaud in the back of the room. Thank you, thank you. But this is my favorite one - I've actually used this in Committee meetings. This is a statement by John B. Gervais, who was an officer in the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad in New York, which eventually became the New York Central, I believe. This goes back to 1831, in comments to his Board of Directors. By then, he had made some progress and had started getting his little trains up and running. "The expectations of the public had been so much excited in reference to traveling that they will not be satisfied with moderate speeds, say 10 or 12 miles per hour. They must have 15 as a regular business!" I won't say anything more.