

Today our urban transportation functions have been thrown seriously out of balance. As more cars congest our streets, slow our traffic, and entail increasingly heavy costs in thoroughfares, parking, and traffic control, one of our largest urban investments, that of our public transportation systems, is being steadily liquidated at a time when the need for it is increasing.

Unable to meet the needs out of the fare box for improved and extended service, our public transit systems have curtailed service and increased fares, and as a result have forced more people into automobiles.

In the 10-year period between 1952 and 1962, the number of revenue passengers carried by all forms of transit service declined about 40 percent in the face of an exploding urban population. Declining patronage has brought declining income, higher fares, curtailed service, and further losses in passengers.

Caught in this vicious circle, many transit lines and systems have gone out of business. Since 1954 a total of 199 have been abandoned, and many others are in serious financial difficulty.

The Federal Government has a basic interest in the efficient functioning of our cities, where nearly 70 percent of our people live and where most of our services and wealth are generated. Our transportation system, moreover, has been a Federal interest since the founding of the Nation.

Congress has voted billions of dollars to help build highways and airports, dredge harbors, build canals, and improve river navigation. It voted substantial assistance to our railroads when they needed help in opening the undeveloped frontier areas for settlement. Not until the trial program authorized in the Housing Act of 1961, however, did we recognize the Federal responsibility to aid in the mass transportation systems of our urban economy.

At present, 50- to 90-percent grants are available for urban highways under the Federal-aid highway program. Under this program about \$20 billion will be spent, and should be, on the urban portion of the Interstate System alone, and additional hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent each year on the urban primary and secondary systems. Thus, massive and continuing grant assistance is available for needed urban highways, whereas the only Federal assistance for vital urban mass transportation has been the temporary \$50 million loan program of 1961, and the soon-to-expire \$375 million demonstration grant program. In this situation, it is very difficult for local officials to make objective decisions as to whether particular urban transportation needs are to be met by private automobile or mass transportation facilities. You have heard several mayors testify to this fact during this hearing.

The mass transportation problem is national in scope. It is a major problem and a difficult burden in all our larger cities. And it is equally critical in many of our small ones as well. There are today at least 60 cities with populations between 25,000 and 50,000 that have no organized transit service at all.

The problem is no longer one that can be dealt with on a local basis alone. It has long since spilled over the boundaries of local political jurisdictions and even over State lines. Some 53 of the country's approximately 200 metropolitan areas either border or cross over State lines, with their transit needs ignoring local boundaries.

Even more acute than the jurisdictional difficulties are the financial difficulties of the local governments. Many are hard pressed to pay for essential services to growing populations. Many have reached maximum debt limits.

Yet the revenue from fares alone cannot provide the capital needed to meet growing urban transit needs at fares that are economical for the riders and the company. Private capital must be supplemented by public investment, as we have done in the past for airlines, railroads, shipping, and automobile travel, in order that our transit systems can help to meet the urgent needs of our expanding urban areas.

House bill 13732 submitted by Representative Widnall, of New Jersey, would amend the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 to authorize additional annual appropriations for grants—providing limited but vital Federal and local assistance necessary to keep our mass transit systems in business and to develop balanced and economical urban transportation systems.

The potential of such Federal help has already been indicated through demonstration projects assisted under the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964. At this point I would like to commend John C. Kohl, former Deputy Administrator, Office of Transportation, Housing and Home Finance Agency (later Department of Housing and Urban Development), who has so capably