

ing. In face of this mandate, and the facts supporting it, I simply cannot understand how even one such bridge can possibly be termed a key priority project. In my opinion, it is impossible to rationalize that the present Chesapeake Bay Bridge—operating at about half its yearly projected capacity—despite summer peaks on selected weekends—can with any amount of reason or justification be considered a priority over a second harbor tunnel.

A second tunnel will be a closing link in the present Baltimore beltway. It is a need desperately felt by hundreds of thousands of people suffering unnecessary daily inconveniences because of bureaucratic procrastination over a decision to begin this project. The great majority of tunnel traffic users are those traveling to and from work, particularly in the heavily industrialized eastern Baltimore County complex which is so vital to the economic health of the entire Baltimore metropolitan area.

Engineering studies and reports establish the fact that traffic through the present tunnel is increasing by over 1 million vehicles per year. Currently the tunnel is being used by 19 million vehicles annually, and this means, unquestionably, that it will be operating far beyond its projected 21 million vehicle capacity per year before 1970. These underestimates of traffic figures for the present tunnel give the error in volume on the present Bay Bridge.

This fact takes on added significance when you consider that even a decision to begin work on a second harbor tunnel today would place completion of this facility somewhere in the year 1971. It will take that long to build. Additionally, the current tunnel capacity is exceeded every single day during morning and evening rush hours as well as during peak Friday traffic crushes.

As county executive of the county in which virtually the entire beltway is located, and in which much of the heavy regionally important industry is situated, and where many thousands of noncounty workers live, sleep, and send their children to school, an area which is being taxed severely under the new Maryland tax reform program to assist the city of Baltimore in its many pressing fiscal problems, I sound this warning with the fervent hope that the shocking realization of a pending traffic catastrophe will help shape the proper solution and spur the necessary proper action.

Continual delays will not only bring about and compound unbearable traffic congestion I have described, but will also drive business away from Metropolitan Baltimore and cause drastic inconveniences and delays to the general motoring public. What we need is an accelerated "crash" construction program unlike any undertaken by any State or local government anywhere at any time. We need speed and we need quality. And, we need them now.

The most extensive 2-year traffic study ever made for the metropolitan area, costing over \$800,000, is contained in a report by Wilbur Smith Associates. It confirms the absolute immediate traffic need for a second harbor tunnel. Further, this report not only recommends and justifies a two-lane tunnel, but a four-lane tunnel.

It is simply a matter of first things first, gentlemen, directing our plans and energies to the needs of greatest magnitude. Constituents expect this of their elected officials.

Mr. Chairman, you, as one of the sponsors of this required legislation, as we understand it, and as one of our four Congressmen in Balti-