

ment of Transportation. In the future we will be the focal point for Government-wide activity in the field of aircraft noise abatement. Later in my testimony I will comment on how we have organized the implementation of these new responsibilities within the Department of Transportation.

There are few subjects within the responsibilities of the Department of Transportation of greater importance than noise abatement.

Our effort to find solutions to the problems of noise abatement is part of a total departmental effort to insure that transportation activities do not adversely affect our natural environment.

Sections 2(b)(2) and 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act case upon me, as Secretary of Transportation, a major responsibility to insure that we preserve, to the maximum extent possible, the values of our society and the rich natural assets which we enjoy.

We intend to conserve our great natural resources. We intend to not only protect but hopefully enhance our great historical sites. We are determined to do the same for the great sites of natural or man-made beauty which abound in this Nation. Most of the problems we have faced in reaching those goals in the past have been related to our highway construction effort. But we can be sure they will be found in airport construction and other activities in the future.

There is no question that one of the goals we must have is to maintain an environment in which noise levels do not impair or indeed destroy the normal process of life.

For those who must live surrounded by the din of normal city life, the whine of an increasing number of jet aircraft can make life almost intolerable for many who live below or near the path of flight. I am not here to tell you that there are easy solutions for the problem. But I am here to tell you that the Department of Transportation is devoting every possible resource to finding solutions.

Let me begin by saying that I do not believe there will ever be such a thing as a quiet airplane. Despite our far longer experience with the problems of truck noise and railroad noise, we have not been able to produce quiet vehicles in those modes of transportation. But I am convinced that we will be able, by technological and regulatory means, to reduce the impact of aircraft noise exposure for the majority of Americans who are now, or will potentially be, subject to excessive aircraft noise exposure.

One of the major difficulties in determining what is a tolerable level of noise exposure is the great diversity of human response and reaction to noise. That phenomenon is made even more complex by the various types of construction of buildings in which Americans live or work.

At Kennedy Airport there is a motel, sitting practically on the airport grounds, which is exposed to a noise level that must be one of the highest magnitudes in the country on a sustained basis. Yet conversation and sleep are no problem in that building for most occupants, because of its construction and insulation.

Two miles off the runway at JFK there is a large residential community in which neighbors experience different effects from low-flying jet aircraft. While their backyards and patios are quite vulnerable, families living in air-conditioned, brick homes with all windows closed experience much less annoyance from jet noise than the family living next door in a framehouse with windows open for ventilation and cool air who may find conversation, radio and television listening,