

STATEMENT OF HON. DONALD J. IRWIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Mr. IRWIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Forgive me for being late. I should have been here at 10 but I had an appointment that kept me.

Mr. FRIEDEL. We understand.

Mr. IRWIN. I have come here to testify briefly and informally on the matter that is before you.

I want, first of all, to congratulate the committee for the work it has done in this field, and to encourage you to continue to give a hand in this field. I know the chairman of the subcommittee lives in that great northeastern metropolitan area which faces a very critical problem in this field right now. The other two gentlemen come out from the open spaces, and I am very, very grateful to them for the thought and attention they have given this problem which isn't as serious for them as it is for us.

Mr. Pickle just said that he was a reluctant supporter of this legislation when it first came before the committee. Yesterday morning I was on the turbotrain that United Aircraft is working on under this program, and I wish that I had thought of calling you all up to come out and look at it. I don't know if any of you got to see it yesterday.

Mr. PICKLE. No, we did not, Mr. Irwin. We had wanted to, but it left.

Mr. IRWIN. I don't know whether it is still in town. It is not in town. But the next time it is in town I will make a special point of getting you down because I think it really forcefully indicates what can be done and what should be done and what perhaps hasn't been done.

Your colloquy with Mr. Minor just now, I think, underlines what the problem has been. We are all delinquent in a way. The great highway expansion programs of the last 15 to 20 years have had their impact and, in fact, they have accelerated the loss of revenue traffic to the railroads, and I don't know who we blame for that.

The public itself has enjoyed this great new freedom that the automobile has given it, and yet in the Northeast we see that this is not the long-term solution. I come down here once a week and return every weekend, and I find myself, for example, driving by automobile from Norwalk, Conn., into LaGuardia Airport because that is where the frequent service is from.

The traffic tangles around New York in the morning are fantastic and I really wonder how the people who drive into the city every day do it, and whether any one has given much thought to the tremendous expenditures involved in driving cars into the city every day, the pollution that is created, the ulcers that are promoted. What it does to their health, it seems to me, must be brutal, and yet no one has thought about stopping this. We do need some real breakthroughs in ground transportation, something between the plane and the automobile.

I think here in Washington we have a very dramatic situation and that is the Dulles Airport and its use, and I think the breakthrough some day will come when we figure some way to get people out there quickly. You are going to need real high speeds. There is no question, for example, that unless trains can get close to the 200 miles an hour speed you are not going to get a change in travel habits.