

be a little unrealistic. This is a trait common to development of new systems which frequently turn out to be more complicated technologically than considered at the outset. I have every confidence that the technical difficulties will be overcome as a result of the demonstration trains, and that the operation of these trains in public service will tell us whether improved rail passenger systems can play a significant future role in the intermediate distance travel market and heavily populated sectors of the country.

In conclusion, I urge that the legislation be extended.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM B. JOHNSON, *President.*

RAILWAY LABOR EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION,
Washington, D.C., June 18, 1968.

HON. SAMUEL N. FRIEDEL,

Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation and Aeronautics, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Railway Labor Executives' Association, a voluntary association the chief executive officers of the 23 standard national and international railway labor organizations, I would urge your favorable consideration on H.R. 16024, amended to provide for a two year, rather than the presently included one year extension. It is our conviction that the High Speed Ground Transportation Act must be extended and broadened if this nation is to effect a rational and integrated passenger system.

That we do not presently have such a system is altogether too apparent. Air transportation, only a decade ago thought to be the wave of the future, has reached a saturation point at many city airports. A TIME magazine article of June 14, 1968, cites Los Angeles Airport, designed to handle 15 million passengers a year with their seven highly automated "satellite terminals" as already obsolete. The article also reports that O'Hare airport of Chicago has almost reached the saturation point. In short, as put by New York Port Authority Aviation Director, John R. Wiley, "What we have is an air transportation crisis."

Auto transportation, too, has reached a saturation point in terms of expense, in terms of death and destruction. Last year 55,000 persons were killed in auto accidents and another 4 million were injured. The property damage resulting from automobile accidents was approximately \$12 billion. The pollution which hovers over every metropolitan area owes much of its existence to the internal combustion engine. As a nation, we have spent in excess of \$50 billion for highway construction, thinking that it could fulfill our needs. Now, even before the completion of Interstate Defense Highway program, it is obvious to all that no highway system can relieve pressure of increased passenger transportation.

Side by side with this saturation of highways and airports, we are witnessing the dismantling of our railroad passenger system, which could, with proper planning, technology and financing provide a comfortable, and efficient alternative. The High Speed Ground Transportation program is the only means by which that alternative might be developed. Railroad management generally has shown no desire to develop the kind of railroad passenger service which could meet today's needs with their own money or their own planning. Penn Central's commitment of funds and organization is the exception, not the rule.

Much of today's lopsided and inefficient transportation system is a consequence of railroad management's failure to meet the challenge of modernizing its segment of the passenger transportation industry. Their steadfast refusal to uphold their portion of the transportation sector has placed the initiative for doing so at the doors of Congress.

The promise of the High Speed Ground Transportation Act is not only that it can help relieve the congestion in the northeast corridor, but that its success can persuade the nation's railroads to accept their responsibility for intercity transportation by showing them its profitability. We have never accepted the proposition that rail passenger service must be limited to those areas where, due to congestion in air transportation, the train is the fastest transportation available. Comfortable, efficient ground transportation when available is always in demand. Certainly, the present carnage on our highways suggests a need that could be translated into sales and profit for efficient rail service.

Consequently, it is our hope that your subcommittee will continue to impress upon the industry the need for service which the present demonstration projects promise.

Yours very truly,

G. E. LEIGHTY, *Chairman.*