

CAMDEN, N.J., July 18, 1967.

Mr. ALAN BOYD,
 Secretary, Department of Transportation,
 Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. BOYD: On February 15, 1967, the Camden Civil Rights-Ministerium Neighborhood Groups Coalition wrote to President Johnson.

In that letter (a copy of which is enclosed) several crucial problems relating to Camden's Workable Program *and* relocation problems created by federally assisted highway construction were raised. Recommendations for legislative and/or executive action were made to the President on page 6 of that letter. We have received no meaningful or significant response on the issues raised concerning Camden's Workable Program. We have received no pertinent response concerning the matters raised about highway construction financed in whole or in part by federal funds and relocation problems caused by such highway construction. Correspondence from the Commerce Department and your Department has failed to deal with the substance of the proposals made.

Pages five to eleven of the enclosed copy of the letter of February 15 point out in detail the problems people in Camden faced due to the construction of two new highways and a connector linking them. These highways cut through low income neighborhoods. They are being constructed without any meaningful attempt on the part of the City of Camden, the State of New Jersey, or the United States Government to provide decent low income housing units for the displaced to move into. Instead of slum conditions being eliminated, new slums are being created. Conditions in what remains of the ghettos are deteriorating rapidly. Overcrowding is a chronic problem. Absentee property owners and speculators are permitting their property to rot.

The effects of the highway construction are being felt throughout the city. In Parkside, a moderate income, predominantly Negro section of Camden families are being forced to subdivide their apartments and houses in order to provide shelter for relatives and friends who are being displaced. If this process continues, and it will have to unless Camden obtains a sudden and substantial infusion of decent low income housing for the bulk of displacement is yet to come, this residential area of Camden will become a slum and if it becomes a slum, it will help to perpetuate the myth that Negroes and Puerto Ricans create ghettos. Conditions such as these reveal the direct inter-relationship between matters of transportation and urban development.

In the legislation which established the Department of Transportation, Congress provided that: "The Secretary and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall consult and exchange information regarding their respective transportation policies and activities; carry on joint planning, research and other activities; and coordinate assistance for local transportation projects. They shall jointly study how federal policies and programs can assure that urban transportation systems most effectively serve both national transportation needs and the comprehensively planned development of urban areas. They shall, within one year after the effective date of this Act, and annually thereafter, report to the President, for submission to the Congress, on their studies and other activities under this subsection, including any legislative recommendations which they determine to be desirable. The Secretary and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall study and report within one year after the effective date of this Act to the President and the Congress on the logical and efficient organization and location of urban mass transportation functions in the Executive Branch." (49 U.S.C.A. § 1653(g) 1966 Cum. Supp.)

The coordination of the activities of your Department in providing means of transportation with the activities of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in attempting to help provide a decent life for all urban dwellers is critical. We do not believe that anyone can gain a complete picture if he looks at matters solely from the perspective of his own Department and particular interest, and therefore, we hope in carrying out the directive of Congress that you and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development will pool your knowledge and resources to show to each other, the President, the Vice-President, the Cabinet, and the Congress the drastic effects which highway construction has on people's lives, particularly on the urban poor, whose needs created or aggravated by highway construction are not met by concomitant action designed to satisfy these needs.