

Bergstrom Air Force Base is growing and it has a total complement now of almost 7,000.

Now the Interstate System which was set up in the early 1950's was a logical approach by routing it from Houston to San Antonio and out to El Paso. But, since that time the population in Austin has increased nearly 20 percent. This is an indication that the area is growing, the city is growing, and the surrounding areas are growing.

Now almost every town affected by this proposal has met to consider the impact of an improved Interstate Highway No. 10. They met about 2 or 3 weeks ago again and formed an official body.

Attached to my testimony—and I do not know whether it is in yours, but there is a statement showing a resolution by each of the counties and/or cities by which this alternate or spur would pass. There is complete agreement and a great deal of enthusiasm for this particular loop.

Now let me mention one other point. The Texas Highway Department—and I make reference now to Tom Wood, the district engineer for the State highway department—told me that a survey is already underway now to make a total and an accurate estimate of the traffic through this particular area.

The State of Texas is planning to build a four-lane road now from this point of Columbus, Tex, to Austin. That is at the point again where you see the two black and red lines converging, this point here.

They are going to build a four-lane road into here, into Austin, simply because the volume of traffic now is so heavy from Houston into Austin that this is where the traffic is flowing and they planned to build in a four-lane system. It will not be fully up to interstate standards but they are planning it with the view in mind that it could be converted or made into an interstate system which would mean then that the participation of the Federal Government in cost would almost be halved at some point later. But we are trying to provide for this eventuality.

It would not detract from the traffic from Houston to San Antonio and El Paso. It is already so heavy that there is great congestion. You are going from an area of Houston which is 1.5 million into a city of San Antonio of 1 million, and the difficulty is considerable getting in and around at times particularly with the increased volume of traffic.

We need an alternate route just like, Mr. Chairman, we already have in Texas. You have this Highway 35 coming up, going into Dallas and Fort Worth. We have an alternate route and this is a proposal for an alternate route that would be a complement to this system.

There is a very definite need for it and I wish each member would look at the economic factors in my testimony now or later and see how very sharp the increase of growth is for Austin and the central Texas area.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I will be glad to answer any questions or respond in any way I might if the members of the committee have any questions.

I appreciate this chance to appear before your committee.

Mr. KLUCZYNSKI. Mr. Pickle, how much additional mileage are you asking for?

Mr. PICKLE. It will be a little less than 200 miles.