

The distinguished Chairman of the Subcommittee has indicated his own interest in and support of the project as well.

We realize that, with the current pressures for reduced spending, it has not been realistic to proceed with the legislation up to this time.

However, I very strongly feel that in considering the future of the highway program, particularly beyond completion of the present interstate system, this Subcommittee should give priority attention to the Great River Road, and I urge you to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS S. KLEPPE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of H.R. 10565, a bill to add 1726 miles of road to the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

My reasons for introducing this bill are not complex. Today most of the major highway, railroad and airline facilities serving the Great Plains area are East-West oriented. An improved North-South highway transportation system would be of enormous economic benefit to the entire region.

Good roads are vital to the development of an area. No major economic explosion takes place until there is good surface transportation serving an area. You just do not have expansion and development without a good system of highways. All of us recognize this. We would not have our great Interstate system in this country if we didn't. But we have not gone far enough. The area between the existing Interstate routes 25 and 29 does not have such a system. One needs to be put there to realize the economic potential in that area.

The road proposed in H.R. 10565 would run south from the North Dakota-Canadian border to Brownsville, Texas. It would run slightly west of Pierre, South Dakota, continuing through Western Nebraska, Kansas, the Oklahoma-Texas Panhandle, and on to Brownsville.

Mr. Chairman, I think that when one looks at a map of the United States with an overlay of the Interstate System, there appears a large gap between Interstate 25 to the West and Interstate 29 to the East. I-29 runs along the easternmost edge of North and South Dakota, Nebraska and into eastern Kansas. I-25 runs through Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and into the westernmost edge of Texas. A 500 mile void is left between these two systems.

I think there is a good industrial growth potential for the midwest states justifying construction of the North Dakota to Texas route. This route would connect areas with high economic growth potential, marketing centers, and state capitals.

Mr. Chairman, I have no exact line along which the road proposed is to be constructed. That, I think, is up to the results of the engineering studies that would be undertaken. My main concern is seeing that such a road is constructed through this vast area of the mid-west United States. H.R. 10565 would accomplish that purpose.

STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE JOHN O. MARSH, VIRGINIA

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to appear here before you in general support of the objectives of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968. I want to take this occasion to point out a few things about the purposes of a part of this legislation which I believe too often are overlooked. I want to talk about Forest Highways and Forest Development Roads and Trails.

Section 5(5) covers authorizations for Forest Development Roads and Trails to construct and maintain an adequate system of roads and trails to serve the national forests.

When some of you hear about "national forests" I am sure you conjure up a picture of tall peaks and tall timber in the mountainous areas of the western States. We have great national forests in the eastern part of our country too. These eastern national forests are unique in that they were generally established in the 1930's. Through careful protection and management, these forests are taking their rightful place in serving the American people. As our population has grown and people have had more leisure time, they have more and more sought the type of recreation which can be and is provided in the national