

With your permission I will proceed with my statement. The statement is short and I would like to read it.

Mr. KLUCZYNSKI. You may proceed.

Mr. BRAMAN. I am J. D. Braman, mayor of Seattle, Washington, and chairman of the National League of Cities Committee on Transportation. I appear today representing 14,400 cities on behalf of the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The building of the Federal Interstate System has been substantially completed when we look at it in terms of the 41,000 miles that were originally contemplated. There remains about 3,000 miles to be built in metropolitan areas. That the last miles are proving to be the most difficult of accomplishment is a fact of life on which this committee is particularly well informed.

What are the reasons for the difficulties that highways face in urban areas from coast to coast, including my own city of Seattle? In my view, the methods which have proved acceptable in the past do not answer the problems of today. In large part what was accomplished in the first decade of the Interstate System was to link together the metropolitan areas of the United States. This has been done in an outstanding manner—probably the greatest public works project in the history of any nation.

To bring these highways into and through urban areas will require different techniques than have heretofore been used. The costs of building a highway outside an urban area are easy to measure according to objective criteria such as land costs and costs of improving the right-of-way. The costs involved in the urban areas are measured not only by such objective criteria, but also in terms of people, and the effect that the project will have on their environment. Ritualistic right-of-way and access hearing proceedings whose purpose is simply to satisfy the requirements of the law will not suffice. Citizen involvement in the formulation of plans adds another complication to the speed and efficiency with which location and design decisions are made and executed but it is an ingredient which we will have to accept. By having community participation, I do not mean to suggest that we will be able to satisfy everyone. Undoubtedly, there will be a point where the project must go forward despite opposition. Every citizen is entitled to be informed, heard and assured that whatever action is taken will not only preserve, but hopefully improve the equality of the environment in which he lives.

The cities are pleased that H.R. 17134, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1968, places particular emphasis on the highway problems of the urban areas. The provisions of this bill will continue the Interstate, ABC, and Highway Safety programs which are having significant effects in improving convenience and safety of highway transportation. In addition, H.R. 17134 takes some new directions in the areas of right-of-way acquisition, fringe parking, and support for improvement of urban roads which have great potential for bettering urban transportation systems.

In a statement before this committee on February 20 of this year, the executive director of the National League of Cities called for action to develop a program to aid urban street and highway systems. Our cities badly need funds to improve street and highways that are not part of the Interstate System. Development of street and high-