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Floor Statement on S. 1382 - A Bill Authorizing Funding for Transportation Research and Development

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By Mr. MUSKIE (for himself, Mr. HUMPHREY, and Mr. HART):

S. 1382. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a special program of transportation research and development utilizing the unique experience and manpower of the airframe and defense industries, and for other purposes. Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

Mr. MUSKIE. Mr. President, I am introducing a bill today to channel some of the funds that were originally allocated to the SST into areas of our transportation system that desperately need money. My bill will bring the partially unused talents and the experience of the airframe and defense contractors to bear on the problems of transportation that face the great bulk of Americans.

This bill authorizes \$100 million to be spent on research and development in aviation safety, into aviation systems serving areas of concentrated population, and into urban mass transit systems.

The bill provides priority to contractors applying for these grants which have had a contract with the Federal Government canceled within 12 months of application, or which reduced their labor force by 10 percent since January 1, 1969, or which are located in areas with unemployment 50 percent above the national average for 3 consecutive months within the last year.

This bill answers the priority question we faced on the SST vote by channeling Federal investment into areas of great transportation need.

This bill utilizes the talents and experience of the airframe and defense contractors who can best meet these transportation needs.

And this bill fulfills the obligation of the Federal Government to those now working on the SST.

It is not difficult to find areas in our transportation system that urgently and desperately need Government investment. We need funds for the further development of aircraft noise and air pollution abatement technology. We need research to make our airports and airways safe. The administration itself testified that we must invest over \$14 billion in air safety in this decade. Also, we need terminal facilities to handle the new jumbo jets so that time gained in the air is not lost on the ground.

And looking to the future in aviation, we need to develop STOL and VTOL aircraft for short flights in our urban corridors to save our major airports from overwhelming traffic and continuing delays. And finally, high-speed ground transportation, such as air cushion vehicles or monorails, are required to bring airports within the reach of our cities.

Just as important as revitalizing our airways is the problem of urban mass transit. Our cities are being choked to death because of outmoded or nonexistent transit systems and the increasing reliance on automobiles. These are the transportation problems of noise, of air pollution, and of wasted space and time that must be met. Yet the administration has consistently opposed full funding of

the Urban Mass Transit Act, while it relentlessly pushes the SST. Today, there is a backlog of \$2.2 billion in requests for urban mass transit funds; yet the Department of Transportation has frozen \$200 million of the \$600 million appropriated. We could spend the total 10-year Federal investment in the SST on urban mass transit and fill only about half of the pending requests for mass transit funding now before the Department of Transportation.

This policy of underinvestment in city transportation will delay for years, even a decade, decent transportation that the average American needs every day.

The administration's refusal to move on mass transit funding also threatens our health. If the clean air standards of the air pollution bill passed by Congress last year are to be met, up to 75 percent of car traffic in our 60 largest cities will have to be replaced by some form of mass transit. At present funding, that antipollution legislation will be destroyed.

The corporate structures that have the best technical and industrial potential to solve these aviation and mass transit problems are the airframe and defense corporations—the very jobs and capital that were used for the SST.

Many contend that the Boeing and General Electric technical and production capabilities cannot be readily adapted to the design and construction of urban transportation systems. But the striking characteristic of the industry points to the opposite conclusion.

The Department of Transportation itself is now finding that aerospace talents are directly and almost immediately transferable to other areas requiring high technical expertise and systems analysis capability. In fact, it was DOT's forceful argument of this point that permitted the Department to take over the Cambridge Research Center from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The center and its employees, once working on sophisticated space technology, are now working on solutions to our urban transportation dilemmas.

The Department also has current contracts with research firms such as Rand, the Institute for Defense Analysis, and Mitre. These firms had little experience in nonmilitary work until defense and space budget retrenchments forced them to apply their talents in other fields.

Other aerospace and defense firms have found it possible to change as our priorities have changed. The North American Rockwell Corp. has a DOT contract to develop a high-speed urban tracked system. The Rohr Corp. is building cars for the Bay Area Rapid Transit in San Francisco and an air cushion vehicle for France. The Garrett Research Corp. is developing a linear induction motor and United Aircraft built both the vehicles and the propulsion system for the Boston-New York Turbo-train.

These aerospace concerns have found that dependency on aerospace contracts—such as the SST—is neither the way of the future in transportation, nor the key to their corporate survival.

My bill matches the talents and experience of the SST and defense contractors with our pressing transportation needs. Priority for use of the authorized \$100 million of research and development will go to firms that have been adversely affected by Government policy. Cancellation of a Government contract, unusually high unemployment, or substantial layoffs will give defense and airframe contractors, who would be otherwise eligible, a first crack to land one of these contracts.

By changing our priorities to meet our transportation needs in urban mass transit and aviation, we know we can be assured of one very important side effect: we will be providing many thousands more jobs during this decade and the decades that follow for our transportation workers. There is no doubt that a full Federal commitment to meet these essential transportation needs of cities and towns across the Nation will create much more employment over the long range than our SST effort would ever have entailed.

In addition, the job-producing effects of these new transportation facilities is likely to be massive. We know that many of our small towns and cities have had their economic development substantially slowed due to nonexistent or inadequate airport facilities. We know that man-hour losses due to lateness in our great urban centers are substantial and continually getting worse due to inadequate and overloaded mass transit facilities. And we know there are increasing numbers of people who join the ever-growing welfare rolls because they cannot find or cannot afford transportation to their jobs.

So let us put the 8,000 SST employees, and some of the tens of thousands of defense and airframe workers, back on the job—and on a job that needs to be done.

Mr. HART. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Maine for raising the points he does. I am sure that others of us will want to join him in this suggestion.