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Since the Senate voted to delete funds for the SST, supporters of the SST have said that termination of the program threatens America's economic stability and technological leadership. President Nixon himself painted a dark picture ... the loss of 150,000 jobs and a crippled aerospace industry.

Cancellation of the SST program at this date will not mean the loss of 150,000 jobs. That figure represents the level of employment at full production and includes allowances for employment among the manufacturers of support equipment and in other associated areas. Full production would be many years in the future. The allegation that 150,000 jobs are at stake now is a hoax.

In fact, Department of Transportation statistics indicate that a maximum 8,000 workers are employed during the current prototype phase; less than 1,000 would be employed on the SST program at the end of this phase. These are the jobs that are at stake.

It is important that these workers continue to be employed. And it is important that as many of these jobs as possible remain in the aerospace industry, a sector of the economy hard hit by changes in our national priorities.

But it is not important that these workers build an SST. That project is as much a waste of their talents as it is a waste of our money.

The men and women of the aerospace industry have helped America gain technological leadership not only in aviation and space, but in many other areas as well. This industry is known for its expertise in advanced research and engineering, systems development and management and for its innovative leadership. These skills could help solve our pressing urban transportation crisis.

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 two most striking characteristics of the industry point to the opposite conclusion.

First, 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 non-military 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 Corporation has a DOT contract to develop a high speed urban tracked system. The Rohr Corporation is building cars for the Bay Area Rapid Transit in San Francisco and an air cushion vehicle for France. The Garrett Research Corporation is developing a linear induction motor, and United Aircraft built both the vehicles and the propulsion system for the Boston-New York Turbotrain.

These aerospace concerns have found that dependancy on aerospace contracts -- such as the SST -- is neither the way of the future in transportation, nor the key to their corporate survival. There is no reason to keep that knowledge from Boeing and General Electric.

The second characteristic of the aerospace industry that indicates great flexibility is the high rate of turnover among scientific and technical employees. These professionals, who comprise most of the SST workforce, stay with one company for an average of less than three years. This transferability of workers among companies, the highest of any industry in the nation, is the result of workers

following contracts from company to company. Few contracts have had as lengthy a term as the SST contract; the industry could absorb its termination.

More than money will be wasted if the SST project is continued. The valuable expertise of the aerospace industry and the skills of its workers will be paid by public funds to develop a plane the public doesn't want and doesn't need.

Mr. President, I will vote against cloture because I think that only in this way can we effectively stop the momentum which has been built by these purchases, and which will continue if the conference report is approved by Congress.

The second good reason for voting against cloture, I think, is to stimulate the leaders on both sides of this argument to work out a substantive compromise. Without a vote for turning down cloture today, the prospects for that compromise will vanish.

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