

**TESTIMONY  
OF  
NEAL A. MCCALED  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY - INDIAN AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
ON THE  
REAUTHORIZATION OF TEA-21  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**OCTOBER 9, 2002**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Neal McCaleb and I am the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs within the Department of the Interior (Department). It is a pleasure to be here today to provide an overview of the Departmental programs for the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The Department is working closely with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Administration as they develop an Administration proposal and has submitted detailed technical reports to the FHWA, and we will be able to report to you more fully when the Administration has worked out its proposed program for the next Congress. I have come prepared to speak about the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) programs, as well as other Departmental programs and interests of the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management in the Federal Lands Highway Program, and I have technical experts from these other Bureaus to answer questions concerning their Bureaus under TEA-21.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs**

Transportation systems that provide access to economic markets are the foundation for economic development for any community. For rural Indian communities, paved roads and safe bridges are also critical for access to basic services such as education, health care, and law enforcement.

President Bush pledged to improve education in America and to "leave no child behind." The BIA is one of only two agencies in the Federal government that manages a school system. BIA school buses travel over 15 million miles a year to transport almost 50,000 Indian children to and from the 185 BIA schools. Many of the bus routes are on one-lane, unimproved earth roads without basic shoulders or safety barriers. Improved roads will mitigate safety problems for school children and others who travel the reservation road system, and will also serve as a critical economic development stimulus by making reservations more amenable to business investment.

The Federal Lands Highways Program currently provides \$275 million annually for Indian Reservation Roads. These funds have supported many accomplishments, including 1,400 projects being administered by the BIA and tribal governments, 622 miles of roads have been constructed or improved and 42 percent of the funds administered through self-determination contracts/agreements.

The Indian Reservation Road system has 55,900 miles of road of which 33,600 are unpaved roads. Despite the sizable Federal investment that has been made in the roads and bridges in the IRR system, the majority of roads in Indian and Alaska Native communities remain unpaved or in poor condition. In addition, BIA estimates that approximately 1/3 of its current allocation could be used to implement transit systems in rural Indian and Alaska Native communities. These types of transit facilities are a new eligible activity authorized under TEA-21.

We recognize, however, that we need to establish funding priorities to ensure that available IRR funding sources are allocated to address our most pressing needs. In addition, coordination between Indian tribes, the BIA, the Department of Transportation and state and local governments is required to pool all available funding resources to address priority needs. We are also working to establish performance measures to determine which roads should receive funding and how they are maintained.

## **National Park Service**

Over 285 million people visit our nation's National Parks each year. They go to experience nature's majestic beauty, see historic and cultural wonders, and spend time with friends and family, enjoying the vast array of recreational and educational opportunities.

The National Park Service is committed to ensuring that every park visitor has a memorable, educational, safe and enjoyable visit. In order to achieve that goal, we must restore the existing National Park Service transportation infrastructure and develop new alternative systems of transportation in and around parks.

The National Park Service has 5456 miles of paved roads and parkways, 3000 miles of unpaved roads, 1733 bridges, 71 tunnels, and 12,500 miles of trails located in parks all across the United States. In addition, the National Park Service owns and operates 600 vehicles such as buses, trams and shuttles that service 102 alternative transportation systems in 90 parks.

National Park Service challenges include a substantial backlog of road, bridge, trail and vehicle repair or replacement needs. Many parks are overcrowded and experience serious traffic congestion, noise and air pollution, and poor road conditions during the peak seasonal periods, with sixty parks that are in regional air quality non-attainment zones. Roadway traffic accidents cost the park road user millions of dollars annually due to injuries and property damage, and our nation's \$10 billion National Park Service road and bridge infrastructure investment is gradually deteriorating. Up to 80 percent of the transit vehicles owned by the National Park Service are more than 12 years old and many do not use the new innovative technologies available today or use alternative fuels that burn cleaner. We recognize, however, that we need to establish funding priorities to ensure that available funding sources are allocated to address our most pressing needs. We are also working to establish performance measures to determine which roads should receive funding and how they are maintained.

In response to multiple transportation needs, the National Park Service has developed three funding categories for the current Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) funding to address these important needs:

Category I – Repair, resurfacing, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the existing park roads and parkway infrastructure. The Administration is working on an analysis to determine an investment level to bring the system to "good" condition and meet current safety standards for roads and parkways.

Category II – Completion of Congressionally Authorized Parkway. We will need to allocate a portion of our future funds to complete the unfinished Natchez Trace Parkway multi-use trail in three urban areas and to complete the next logical segment of the Foothill Parkway in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Category III – Alternative Transportation Systems. The United States Department of Transportation Study, mandated by TEA-21, section 3039, supports a continued annual investment to use an integrated system approach to visitor access and mobility using a combination of transportation technologies, facilities, and system management strategies.

The Federal Lands Highway Program currently provides \$165 million annually for National Park programs. Over the life of TEA-21, the National Park Service has made great strides and many accomplishments, such as the rehabilitation of approximately 2 percent of the roads that have stabilized

conditions and curtailed deterioration for the first time since 1987. Four of the six Congressionally mandated parkways have been completed. Five pilot park projects have taught us how alternative transportation reduces air and noise pollution within the parks and helps to forge community cooperation.

National Parks are national treasures. Maintaining parks and park infrastructure is a Federal responsibility that has been neglected for far too long. Over half the deferred maintenance backlog of the National Park system is related to the infrastructure of roads in our national parks.

Secretary Norton is committed to President Bush's "National Park Legacy Project" which calls for the elimination of the deferred maintenance backlog.

### **The Fish and Wildlife Service**

The Fish and Wildlife Service manages over 570 national wildlife refuge and wetland management districts in the 50 states and territories. The public transportation infrastructure on these units includes: over 4,800 miles of roads, about 5,000 parking lots, over 300 bridges, over 680 miles of trails, 6 transit systems and 2 ferry boats. Visitation has increased from 27 million visitors in 1995 to 39 million visitors in 2001. Between 2001 and 2009, visitation is expected to increase over 50%. Visitor generated sales in regional economies is expected to be over \$1 billion per year by 2009.

The Federal Lands Highway Program currently provides \$20 million annually for Refuge Road programs.

The Federal Highway Administration completed the first nationwide inventory and condition assessment of Fish and Wildlife Service managed, public use roads and parking lots in 2002. The FHWA condition assessment and other studies determined that 77% of the roads, 76% of the parking lots, 55% of the bridges and 67% of the trails are in fair to poor condition; substantial efforts are needed to improve these facilities. Further, funding is needed for alternative transportation systems identified in the Congressionally mandated Department of Transportation Study.

The Department also supports the National Scenic Byways Program, the Public Lands Discretionary Program, and Transportation Enhancements Program. These programs provide significant opportunities to work in partnership with the States and local governments. The innovative financing opportunities provided under the Transportation Enhancements program could also benefit other Title 23 and Title 49 funding programs and provide greater opportunities for the Service to work with the States and local communities.

### **Bureau of Land Management**

In the American West, a rapidly growing population makes BLM lands more important than ever before. In the lower 48 states, nearly two-thirds of BLM managed lands are now within an hour drive of urban areas. In 2001, more than sixty-two million visits took place on BLM lands, a 38 percent increase since 1991.

BLM lands are used increasingly for commodity production that contribute to the nation's economy. BLM administered lands contain 349 coal leases, about 49,000 oil and gas leases, of which about 20,000 are producing, and about 290,000 active mining claims. In 2000, these activities generated nearly \$1.7 billion in Federal revenues, with energy and mineral royalties, rents, bonuses, sales, and fees accounting for 94 percent of the total. BLM lands produce about 31% of the nation's coal, 41% of its geothermal electrical energy, 11% of its natural gas, and 5% of its oil.

BLM lands provide important opportunities for recreation, including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, mountain biking, driving off-road vehicles, bird watching, and visiting natural resource and cultural heritage areas. The BLM administers:

- approximately 117,00 miles of fishable streams,
- 2.9 million acres of lakes and reservoirs,
- 6,400 miles of floatable rivers,
- 500 boating access points,
- over 60 national Back Country Byways totaling 3,200 miles, and
- 300 Watchable Wildlife sites

Moreover, the establishment of new National Landscape Conservation Areas and a number of new National Monuments over the past decade has greatly increased visits to BLM- managed public lands for public enjoyment.

In FY '02 BLM received \$900,000 from the FHWA discretionary fund for Planning and Coordination, which was expended for coordination with State highway departments and county governments for state projects and future planning. BLM has not been included in road funding authorizations.

We recognize, however, that we need to establish funding priorities to ensure available Public Lands Highway funds are allocated to better serve local interests by providing access to public lands for the purposes of recreation and important resource uses and can help local communities meet important economic needs. We are also working to establish performance measures to determine which roads should receive funding and how they are maintained.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department on this important issue. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.