

REMARKS, GOVERNOR VIC ATIYEH
OREGON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 14, 1983 2:30 P.M.

FEB 16 1983
Governor Atiyeh

PREPARED TEXT

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION...

I ASKED FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH YOU TODAY-
BECAUSE OF MY STRONG CONCERN FOR PRESERVING THE SCENIC VALUES ² AND
HISTORY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE. / AS YOU KNOW, / TAKING ACTION
TO PRESERVE THE GORGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS IS ONE OF THE TOP
PRIORITIES OF MY SECOND TERM AS GOVERNOR OF THIS STATE.

I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT GOVERNOR SPELLMAN AND I HAVE
BEEN WORKING TOGETHER CLOSELY / AND VIGOROUSLY / IN RECENT WEEKS ON
THIS MATTER. / WE HAVE WORKED THROUGH KEY STAFF TO HAMMER OUT A
JOINT GUBERNATORIAL POSITION THAT WE INTEND TO FINALIZE AND BRING
BEFORE THE CONGRESS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

TODAY, / I WANT TO REPORT TO YOU OUR STRONG HOPE THAT WE
CAN WIND UP OUR WORK AND BRING TO YOU / AND THE CITIZENS OF BOTH
STATES / A SOLID WORKABLE PROPOSAL BEFORE THE END OF MARCH. / AT THE
SAME TIME, / I WANT TO ASK EACH OF YOU PERSONALLY, / AND AS A
COMMISSION, / FOR ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT AS OUR EFFORTS APPROACH
THIS CRITICAL PHASE.

SPECIFICALLY, / I APPEAR BEFORE YOU THIS AFTERNOON BECAUSE OF YOUR DIRECT AUTHORITY OVER ONE OF THE MOST PRICELESS FEATURES OF THE GORGE: / THE OLD COLUMBIA RIVER SCENIC HIGHWAY.

THAT HIGHWAY IS NOT ONLY ONE OF THE GREATEST ENGINEERING ACHIEVEMENTS IN OREGON, / IT IS AN IRREPLACEABLE SCENIC AND HISTORIC ATTRACTION THAT WILL // THROUGH OUR EFFORTS / PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN PROMOTING TOURISM AND MAKING CERTAIN THAT THE TREASURES OF THE GORGE ARE PRESERVED / AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

THE COLUMBIA RIVER SCENIC HIGHWAY, / AS YOU ^{WEN} KNOW, / WAS THE FIRST / MAJOR PAVED ROADWAY IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. / AT THE DAWN OF THE AUTOMOBILE AGE, / IT RECEIVED NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ITS ENGINEERING AND DESIGN. / IT WAS CHAMPIONED BY SOME OF THE GREATEST FIGURES OF OREGON HISTORY; / INCLUDING JOHN YEON, / SIMON BENSON, / SAM HILL, / AND GOVERNOR JULIUS MEIER. // IT WAS DEDICATED IN 1916 BY PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON, AND PRAISED ENTHUSIASTICALLY BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

THE ORIGINAL HIGHWAY WAS PUT TO USE TO ACHIEVE MANY OF THE SAME GOALS WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE // ON A BROADER SCALE // TODAY. / IT PROVIDED PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE SCENIC GRANDEUR OF THE GORGE, / ENCOURAGED MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF RECREATION USES, / ENHANCED TOURISM, / STIMULATED CONSTRUCTION OF MANY LODGES AND FACILITIES, / AND STRENGTHENED THE COMMERCIAL TIES OF THE INLAND COMMUNITIES OF OREGON AND WASHINGTON.

FOR MOST OF THIS CENTURY, MILLIONS OF VISITORS HAVE BEEN
DRAWN TO THE SCENIC EXCITEMENT OF THE GORGE THROUGH THE
OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED BY THIS BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED ROADWAY.

UNFORTUNATELY, ^{ALSO} AS YOU KNOW, ONLY A THIRD OF THE
ORIGINAL HIGHWAY NOW REMAINS OPEN FOR PUBLIC USE, MUCH WAS
ABANDONED/OR DESTROYED/AS FREEWAYS AND LOWER-LEVEL GORGE HIGHWAYS
CAME INTO USE AFTER 1949.

TWO YEARS AGO, I WROTE A LETTER TO THE OREGON COLUMBIA
RIVER GORGE COMMISSION VOICING MY STRONG SUPPORT FOR A
COOPERATIVE EFFORT THAT WOULD DOCUMENT THE HIGHWAY'S
SIGNIFICANCE, AND MAKE FIRM PLANS FOR ITS FUTURE PRESERVATION,
USE, AND CARE.

~~THE COMMISSION WAS~~ ^{THE COMMISSION WAS} UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED A
COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY PROJECT THAT HAS IDENTIFIED HISTORIC
STRUCTURES, MADE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECREATIONAL USES OF
ABANDONED HIGHWAY SECTIONS, AND IDENTIFIED RESTORATION AND
CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES ALONG MANY PARTS OF THE OLD HIGHWAY.

I AM HERE TO PETITION YOU TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO JOIN IN THIS EFFORT. / I ASK THAT YOU JOIN / TOGETHER WITH ME AND COUNTLESS CONCERNED OREGONIANS / TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE AS MUCH AS WE CAN OF THAT GREAT PRICELESS SCENIC HIGHWAY - / ONCE CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MAN-MADE WONDERS OF THE WORLD. / I REGARD OUR SCENIC HIGHWAY RESTORATION EFFORTS AS A KEY PART OF MY OVERALL STRATEGY TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE GORGE AS A WHOLE.

YOU KNOW AND I KNOW THAT APPROPRIATE RESTORATION WILL BE A LENGTHY PROCESS. / AND WE KNOW ALL TOO WELL OF THE SEVERE FISCAL CONSTRAINTS THAT THE AGENCIES INVOLVED - / THE PARKS AND HIGHWAY DIVISIONS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERGOING.

SO THE FIRST PRIORITY IS TO BEGIN NOW TO LOOK FOR EVERY POSSIBLE SOURCE OF SPECIAL FUNDS, / OR OUTSIDE SOURCES OF REVENUE, / THAT COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS VITAL EFFORT.

I EXPECT THAT YOU WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH OUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION IN THAT SEARCH FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

IN THE MEANTIME, / OUR OVERALL GOALS SHOULD BE KEPT STRONGLY IN MIND WHEN MAKING IMPROVEMENTS IN DAILY MAINTENANCE OF THOSE PORTIONS OF THE HIGHWAY STILL IN USE.

ANY WORK WE UNDERTAKE ON THE BEAUTIFUL ARCHING BRIDGES,
THE VIADUCTS, THE INTRICATE STONE WORK AND DRY MASONRY; SHOULD BE
UNDERTAKEN IN THE CONTEXT OF REVITALIZING THE HIGHWAY AND
PRESERVING THE UNIQUE HISTORIC VALUES THE HIGHWAY REPRESENTS.

WE SHOULD LOOK AT REOPENING SOME OF THE OLD TUNNELS. WE
SHOULD REEXAMINE THE ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO US FOR
PRESERVATION AND USE OF THE MANY MILES OF ABANDONED ROADWAY
BETWEEN WARRENDALE AND MOSIER. SCENIC WAYSIDES, TRAILS, PICNIC
AREAS AND BIKEWAYS -- THE POSSIBILITIES ARE BEFORE US IF WE HAVE
THE IMAGINATION AND THE WILL.

I KNOW THAT OUR STATE CAN RELY ON THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS,
AND EXPERIENCE WE ALREADY HAVE ON THIS COMMISSION, AND WITHIN THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AS A WHOLE. YOU WILL KNOW BEST THE
PRIORITIES TO SET, THE METHODS TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOALS, AND THE
PROPER WAYS TO PROCEED.

WHAT I AM ASKING THIS COMMISSION TO DO, MR. CHAIRMAN, IS
TO MAKE A PUBLIC COMMITMENT HERE AND NOW TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE
AS MUCH OF THE OLD COLUMBIA RIVER SCENIC HIGHWAY AS IS POSSIBLE
WITHIN OUR ABILITIES. AND I ASK YOU TO MAKE A BEGINNING, TODAY,
TOWARD THAT GOAL.

BY RESTORING WHAT WE CAN OF THE HIGHWAY, / WE WILL IN TURN
ADD GREAT MOMENTUM TO OUR OVERALL EFFORT TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE
THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE AS A WHOLE. / I VIEW OUR COMMITMENT TO
THE HIGHWAY AS A KEY ASPECT OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE OVERALL
STRATEGY WHICH GOVERNOR SPELLMAN AND I WILL SOON ARTICULATE.

THAT IS WHY I ASK YOU TODAY TO JOIN WITH ME IN THIS
EFFORT - / TO RESTORE AND ENHANCE THE HIGHWAY WHEREVER POSSIBLE, /
AS A PART OF OUR PRIMARY GOAL OF PRESERVING AND PROTECTING OUR
PRICELESS COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE. / BY PUTTING OUR HEARTS AND HANDS
TO THIS TASK TODAY, / WE WILL LEAVE A LEGACY THAT WILL LAST FOR
MANY TOMORROWS TO COME.

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