

REMARKS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE SECOND  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND AT RHODE ISLAND TRUCK  
OWNERS ASSOCIATION DINNER, SHERATON BILTMORE, PROVIDENCE, R. I.  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1961 AT 7 P.M.  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
Public Health Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

#### ACCIDENTS, AIR POLLUTION, AND THE TRUCK INDUSTRY

You have been reminded many times today, I am sure, that this <sup>is the eve of</sup> ~~day is~~  
the twentieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day -- the day that President Roosevelt  
said would go down in history as a day of infamy. In the four years between that  
day and the end of World War II, this Nation lost 275,338 men and women -- most  
of them in the prime of life.

Every year on this date, this great sacrifice is mourned anew -- as it  
should be. Aside from the thousands of personal tragedies that these deaths  
represented, the loss of the millions of man-hours of high productivity which  
we sustained was an economic tragedy to the Nation from which we have not yet  
fully recovered.

In all the wars in American history, including the Korean action, the  
United States lost about 550,000 of her citizens. In the first 59 years of the  
present century, ~~gentlemen~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~she~~ lost 1,335,842 on the streets, roads, and  
highways. Two and one-half times as many victims as in all the wars in our history  
were lost to traffic accidents, most of them preventable. Most of these victims,  
like our war casualties, were in, or had not yet reached, the most productive  
years of their lives. And year after year, we continue to lose almost 40,000  
more, from traffic accidents alone. Is it not time that we <sup>begin</sup> ~~begin~~ to fight the  
highway holocaust in the same way that we fight a war -- with all of our resources,  
all of our strength, all of our perseverance and ingenuity?



You gentlemen, representing the truck transport industry of our State, are well aware of the heavy impact of traffic accidents on the economics of your industry. You have, in a sense, a larger stake in the fight against traffic accidents than any other segment of our industry and our population. And to a great extent, many of you have risen to the challenge, by painstaking maintenance of your vehicles, by careful selection and rigorous training of your employees, and by your strong support of better highways, more realistic traffic regulations, and more effective enforcement efforts.

Yet, in spite of constantly improved engineering, education, and enforcement, we continue to kill about the same number of men, women, and children in traffic accidents every year. It is true that the number of vehicles on the roads increases every year -- and so does the number of miles of better engineered highways. The number of drivers increases every year, and so does the number of traffic police. Why -- in the face of increasing attention and support for the "three E's" of traffic safety -- does the traffic-death total remain at a seemingly irreducible, constant figure? Is it possible that the "three E's" alone, as important as they are, are not the total answer to traffic accidents?

I believe that the answer to that question is "Yes." One vital element has been omitted, until very recently, from our analysis of the situation. That element is true, factual, provable knowledge based on sound, scientific research. Especially necessary before we can hope to make a sizable dent in our annual traffic toll, in my opinion, is research on the human aspects of traffic safety.

Just what physical, physiological, and psychological elements are



necessary for a person to be a safe driver? Which of these elements tend to make a person unsafe at the wheel of a vehicle? ~~Gentlemen~~, after 60 years and almost one and a half million deaths -- we still do not know!

In the United States today, 87 million persons are licensed to operate motor vehicles whenever they please on any public road in the nation. The criteria for licensing vary considerably from State to State, but in one respect at least they are all alike: They are of necessity based largely on assumptions, guesses, and conjecture. Not one State bases the driving privilege on firm knowledge -- because none exists.

If you think I have overdrawn this picture, let me quote from an author of the report on environmental health <sup>had</sup> described the activities of official health agencies in the accident prevention field as falling far short of meeting the need for effective measures to reduce the toll taken by accidents particularly among children. Because of this the appropriation bill included an increase of \$1 million to permit the Public Health Service to initiate an effective well-balanced program to mobilize public health resources in the attacks on death and disability due to accidents.

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least a start has been made toward providing the many answers we need. Early this year, <sup>there was</sup> ~~Secretary Ribicoff~~ established in the Public Health Service a Division of Accident Prevention which has undertaken to find the answers to traffic safety in the same way that the health and medical sciences have found



solutions to many of the great scourges of the past. In the <sup>21</sup>~~17~~ years that I have been privileged to serve as your Representative in Congress, nothing has given me more pride and pleasure than the support I have been able to give to every sound measure for improving the health and safety of the American people. With accidents ranking first among the killers of children, teen-agers, and young men and women up to the age of 35, I am convinced that we must give the Public Health Service the kind of support which enabled it to eliminate or reduce many of the losses from communicable and chronic diseases.

Many of our citizens living today will remember that, not so long ago, smallpox, typhoid fever, diphtheria, and other diseases were considered acts of God which we could do nothing about -- just as many of us regard accidental deaths and injuries today. The first thing we must do, if we want to stop killing people on the highway, is to face up to the reality that accidents are caused by people and that they can be stopped -- by people. Perhaps the largest roadblock to traffic safety is the myth, voiced by too many of us, that human behavior cannot be changed. If this were true, our ancestors would never have advanced from the caveman stage. It is time that we removed this convenient excuse for doing nothing.

We can change human behavior, but before we attempt to do so we ought to be sure we are changing it on the basis of knowledge, rather than conjecture, no matter how reasonable the conjecture might appear to be. As a major step in that direction, ~~Secretary Ribicoff~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~has~~ <sup>been</sup> proposed that research facilities be provided for the Public Health Service efforts in accident prevention, similar to those which have enabled the Service to do so much to advance our health and well-being by research into the causes of heart disease, cancer, and other afflictions of humanity.



As a major part of that facility, ~~Mr. Ribicoff has suggested~~ the development of various types of simulators. <sup>has been recommended</sup> These would enable the Public Health Service specialists to reproduce exactly the environmental aspects of driving, including the automobile, the road, the signs and lights and other traffic-control devices, and all of the other constantly changing conditions involved. With such tools, the scientists could test drivers of all kinds -- the hard-of-hearing, the diabetic, the intoxicated, the elderly, the young, and all the other kinds of people among our 87 million drivers, without exposing them and others to the hazards of this kind of test on the highway itself. Then the scientists could come up with the sound, factual information needed by the motor vehicle administrators, highway engineers, automobile designers, legislatures, law-enforcement agencies, and others to make decisions based on actual facts.

Exactly what happens to a truck driver under the influence of benzedrine? Our doctors have some idea of what it does to him physiologically, but no one now has any real knowledge of what it does to his short-range and medium-range and long-range driving ability. Is there an actual, measurable decrement of ability, and if so, what is it and how does it work? Various jurisdictions are setting up arbitrary levels of alcohol in the blood and saying that a person with such a level is a drunken driver and a person with a lower level is not. Yet the most eminent authorities in the country today disagreed pretty widely on the correct level when they came together at the Public Health Service Conference on Alcohol and Traffic Safety in Pittsburgh last May. In some states, elderly drivers are being threatened with loss or restriction of their driving privileges on purely arbitrary grounds -- because we don't have the information on which to



base a sound decision.

With true simulators and other research tools which are now available or which can be developed, we will be able to approach the accident problem in the same rational way in which we have beaten so many other health problems. I pledge to you that I will continue to devote my best efforts to making possible sound progress in all aspects of public health and safety.

Another health area in which you, as truck operators, have both personal and economic interests is the matter of air pollution. This again is an area with which I have had a great opportunity to become acquainted, from the vantage point of my Chairmanship of the Labor-Health, Education, and Welfare appropriations subcommittee of the House of Representatives. As a result of various hearings which we have held and studies which I have conducted, I have become convinced that the solution of the air pollution problem will require the closest possible cooperation on the part of the Federal Government, the States, and local communities, as well as on the part of the various industries concerned. None of these can do alone what needs to be done. My committee is actively engaged in making possible increased Federal participation in this important work.

My mention of the industrial role in air pollution and its control will come as no surprise to you gentlemen, I am sure. You are undoubtedly more aware than I of the full contribution that the trucking industry is making in the creation and continuation of the problem, and the contribution it should make toward the solution.

There are many new straws in the wind, such as the trend of State legislatures to make blowby equipment mandatory on motor vehicles, and other



approaches on which I need not dwell with a group as well-informed as this. Certainly it is right and proper for government to expect, and if necessary to require, that industry will do its utmost to avoid the creation of health problems and to correct those which it creates. At the same time, I am realistic enough to know that a problem which has as many roots as air pollution will not be solved by a single industry working alone. The most we can expect is that you will shoulder a reasonable share of the burden, and this I am sure you will do.

In the same way, the problem cuts across political and geographical boundaries. We expect each affected State and community to contribute its reasonable share to the correction and prevention of air pollution. But when all of these industrial, State, and local contributions have been made, there will still remain an important part of the problem which only the Federal Government has the resources and the responsibility to undertake. I assure you that I will do my utmost to see that the Federal Government shoulders its fair share of the financial burden, and will continue to provide sound technical guidance and assistance to States, communities, and industries which seek to initiate more effective control programs.

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of addressing the New England Section of the Air Pollution Control Association, here in Providence. In preparing for that meeting, I checked into what the Federal Government has been able to do, under present laws, to assist the New England states and localities. You might be interested in a brief review of these activities, some of which, of course, affect your industry to varying degrees.



Air pollution research, under Public Health Service grants, has been under way at both Harvard and MIT since 1957. This summer, as part of a large research project on atmospheric lead levels and the body lead levels in certain occupational groups, analyses were made of the air in and near Boston's Sumner Tunnel, where especially high concentrations of motor vehicle exhaust emissions were to be expected.

Here in Providence, as well as in Boston and in Berlin, New Hampshire, the PHS Division of Air Pollution has provided technical assistance in a survey of air-pollution conditions. Also in Providence, at the request of my good friend, Genaro Constantino, Chief of the city's Division of Air Pollution and Mechanical Equipment and Installations, an intensive five-week study was conducted last summer to improve knowledge of air pollution levels here and to develop local competence in sampling and analyzing atmospheric contaminants.

Since 1957, the Public Health Service has maintained one non-urban and at least one urban station of the National Air Sampling Network in every State in New England. Many of these stations recently began to sample gaseous pollutants, in addition to the solid contaminants.

One thing is certain - and it has been giving me increasing concern. New England, and especially southern New England, has a serious and growing air pollution problem. On this point, many of my facts and figures have come from Bill Megonnell, whom you all know or should know as the Public Health Service Regional Consultant on Air Pollution in New England. In brief outline form, here is the problem:

The northeast is at least six times as densely populated as the rest of the Nation. Out of a national total of 188 Standard Metropolitan Areas, 45



are located here. These northeastern states consume over one-third of the light and heavy fuel oils burned in this country, one-fourth of the bituminous coal, and almost all of the anthracite coal. When we include New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, we find that over 35 percent of the Nation's manufacturing employment is concentrated here.

Specifically concerning you gentlemen, as representatives of the truck transport industry, is the finding that in many New England areas, emissions from motor vehicles constitute a significant proportion of the total air contamination. There are other major contributors, of course, such as the incineration of tremendous quantities of municipal and industrial waste. In a way, it is ironic that you still hear often the expression, "as free as air." Gentlemen, we are rapidly approaching the point where air will no longer be really free, where in fact it will be one of the costliest of our necessities of life -- unless we take a realistic look at the situation, assess what must be done, and then proceed to do it as quickly and efficiently as we can. This is no where any truer than it is right here in New England. This is why you can be sure that my committee and I will do whatever we can to make more effective Federal aid available for the States and communities faced with the potentially frightening problems of contaminated air.

That these problems are receiving close attention at the highest levels of our Government is evident from President Kennedy's message to Congress on our natural resources. "Although the total supply of air is vast," the President said, "the atmosphere over our growing metropolitan areas -- where more than half of the people live -- has only limited capacity to dilute and disperse the contaminants now being increasingly discharged from homes, fac-



tories, vehicles, and many other sources." The President stressed his intention to foster effective Federal programs for protection of this vital resource.

Now, gentlemen, I would like to close on a note of forthright, blunt frankness. I believe that my long record of public service identifies me clearly as a friend of industry. Representing such a highly industrialized state as Rhode Island, I could hardly be otherwise. But it is industry's long-run interests that I prefer to serve, because I feel keenly that industry's best interests, in the long run, are identical with those of the general public. And in this matter of air pollution, I cannot help but think that some segments of industry have been somewhat short-sighted.

Let's consider especially the automobile industry and the oil industry, with both of which your industry is so closely allied. With respect to these industries, I would like to repeat here part of a statement which I made on the floor of Congress last spring:

"Motor vehicles constitute one of the major sources of air pollution and, unlike many other important pollutant sources, this one is universal throughout the United States. Our cars and trucks go everywhere.

"I cannot escape the conclusion that the automobile industry has been dragging its feet in the matter of factory installation of blowby devices. These, as you probably know, are relatively inexpensive devices for controlling emissions from automotive crankcases. While they will not solve the larger problem of exhaust emissions from the tailpipe, they do eliminate from one-fourth to one-third of the motor car's total contribution to our air pollution problem.

"Such devices were factory installed on new cars sold this year in the one state of California and are available -- at a higher price, of course, --



as optional dealer-installed equipment on new American cars in other localities. In view of the mounting evidence that air pollution not only is costly, but may also be highly hazardous to human health -- and since this new device eliminates a part of it at a low cost -- it would have seemed both good business and good public relations for the auto industry to install such a device at the factory on all new cars sold in this country. This, in fact, is what Secretary Ribicoff recently recommended.

"Unlike automobiles, oil refineries are not an important part of the air pollution problem in every certainly are in many cities. In the Los Angeles area, refineries have placed into effect control measures which drastically reduce their potential contribution to Los Angeles smog. What this means, then, is that Los Angeles suffers a minimum of refinery emissions and, in addition, receives new cars with blowby control devices factory installed.

"In other parts of the country, however, neither the automobile industry nor the oil industry is cooperating half so well. New Jersey, for example, is one of the many states that receive almost none of the advantages insisted upon in Los Angeles. New Jersey comes to mind because it has just recently come to my attention that New Jersey's Rutgers University is attempting to develop smog-resistant plants in order to help truck farmers to survive. A single ride at almost any hour of the day on the upper stretches of the New Jersey Turnpike makes it patently clear why Rutgers is interested in plants that can survive smog, and you don't have to be an expert loaded down with instruments to see that both refineries and automobiles play an important role in New Jersey's smog problem.



"I should think that these two rich industries -- simply in enlightened self interest, if for no other reason -- would do everything they reasonably could do to abate their own contribution to this growing environmental hazard, if only to avert the risk of drastic legislation which might seem to them much less reasonable in its demands."

This is how my statement to Congress ran. I would recommend that last point for your special study, because since last spring indications have begun to accumulate to the effect that the public is becoming more alarmed about both public-health problems which I have discussed here-- traffic accidents and air pollution -- and is beginning to call for legislative action. As a further indication of how these two problems are interconnected in the minds of the people and their governing bodies, I recently saw a single news release from the Public Health Service which referred to two decisions issued by the General Services Administration on the same day, to the effect that both blowby equipment and seat-belt attachments would be required in all motor vehicles purchased by GSA in the future.

We have seen how California adopted its own blowby legislation. Now Wisconsin has made seat belts -- not merely the attachment points, but the belts themselves -- mandatory in all 1962 cars sold in the state. This is how the wind is blowing and, in fact, the way it has always blown. When industry fails to meet its moral obligations, sooner or later the people, through their national and state legislative and administrative branches, force industry's hand.

I have always been proud of the way Rhode Island industries have conducted their affairs in the public interest. I am sure that the truck



transport industry in this state will continue to meet its obligations to public health and safety. To the extent that Federal assistance -- both financial and technical -- is needed, I will continue to do my best to see that it becomes available. I have always felt that voluntary cooperation is better than a law and in this I am sure that you and I are in complete agreement. Please let me know when we in Washington can help.

Thank you.

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