

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
FERRY INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION ACT

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the Ferry Intermodal Transportation Act. The ferry program in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act [ISTEA] is a small but vital program that has benefited 38 States. Ferries are an essential component in many communities, providing vital transportation services for passengers, automobiles, buses and trucks in locations where there are no alternatives. Since ferries do not require costly infrastructure such as roads, bridges, or tunnels, there are great savings in time, capital, and environmental resources. Ferries are effective because they use nature's own highways, rivers, lakes, and bays.

Looking around the Nation, ferries are quietly and efficiently serving their communities. In the northeast, ferries are used in Maine, Massachusetts' Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Islands, and New Jersey's Cape May. In the South, you will find ferries in Florida, Texas, Louisiana, and North Carolina, which has the most extensive commitment to the ISTEA ferry program. The Great Lakes have entire communities which are wholly dependent on ferries in places like Mackinaw Island, Beaver Island, and Washington Island. The West has the famous Catalina ferry in southern California and extensive fleets in the San Francisco Bay. The City of Seattle heavily depends on the Nation's largest capacity ferries to move citizens from Whitby Island and around the Puget Sound. The name, Alaskan Marine Highway System, underscores the importance of ferries to this huge State's transportation needs. Many cities like Boston, Baltimore, and Fort Lauderdale have found water taxis are an effective way to reduce congestion in heavily frequented tourist attractions. The transportation flexibility that ferries provide to communities has been proven time and again. In the most recent San Francisco earthquake, the combined ferry fleets completely took over the functions of the Bay Bridge and kept the Bay Area functioning. During the historic, massive flooding of the Mississippi River, the State of Missouri brought in ferries to replace bridges which had washed away. Time and again, in their quiet way ferries have shown themselves to be an economical, efficient, and effective means of transportation which deserve to be considered in transportation planning.

Let me illustrate what commuter ferry service in the New York Harbor means in my region. Since 1771, there has been a long history and great demand for inter-harbor ferry service. Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr ferried themselves here to Weehawken to fight their duel. John Stevens of New Jersey and Robert Fulton of New York competed in developing the steamboat in their efforts to dominate the ferry market and ultimately revolutionized the maritime industry. We have been through many transportation trends since that time: railroads, streetcars, subway, super-highways, and the era of great bridges and tunnels. Everything old is new again. Ferries, one of our oldest forms of transit in our region, is, when combined with the urban core mass

transit project on the New Jersey side and the vast New York transit system, a seamless web of transportation options to get our people to their places of work and recreation.

The traffic congestion in our streets and on our bridges can only be reduced by the creative use of alternatives. The New York Harbor is now home to the largest and fastest growing network of commuter ferry services. Ferries connect two locations in Weehawken, three locations in Jersey City, Highlands and Atlantic Highlands in New Jersey with the Manhattan Central Business District, Staten Island, Brooklyn, Hunter's Point and Laggard airport in New York. Ferry ridership now exceeds 2.5 million passengers every year. By 2005, 8.5 million passengers will be using ferries annually.

Building on the vision that began in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act [ISTEA], I am proposing new legislative flexibility to help finance comprehensive ferry programs for the nation. We are reauthorizing the original ISTEA ferry program and creating new options for creative entrepreneurship for the financing and construction of ferry systems. This legislation would establish alternative financing for both public and private resources similar to those now used for mass transit. It directs transportation planners to incorporate ferry service in their regional transportation plans. It encourages public private partnerships, joint ventures and flexible options to maximize low cost efficient service.

ISTEA can be proud of the achievements that have been initiated. In the New York Harbor, the ISTEA ferry program was the source for grants of \$1.7 million in loan guarantees for the construction of a new 399-passenger ferry; a total of \$9.2 million in grants and loan guarantees provided by the Clinton administration through the ISTEA ferry program to improve commuter transportation in the New York/northern New Jersey metropolitan area. We must build on this legacy. The Ferry Intermodal Transportation Act is the renewal of this commitment. I urge its passage.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL
PEACE OFFICERS' DAY

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 1997

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, as we honor our Nations' peace officers today, I rise today to honor an outstanding officer in my hometown of Fort Worth. This week, Brad Patterson was recognized as Fort Worth's Officer of the Year at the 45th annual Police Appreciation Dinner.

Brad is an example of an ordinary person doing extraordinary things. A 20-year veteran of the Fort Worth police force, Brad is a forensic crime-scene investigator who has expertise in fingerprint identification and in homicide investigation.

His selection for the award was unanimous. Fort Worth Chief of Police Thomas Windham praised Brad at the ceremony, echoing the strong sense of appreciation for Brad that we all have.

I came to know Brad during my years in the Fort Worth city government, first on the city council and then as mayor. And I can say

from personal knowledge that Brad is a wonderful person, and I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award than he. Brad is an officer of courage and commitment, and man of conviction and character.

Brad Patterson, we in Congress salute you today, and peace officers from around the Nation, as we recognize your accomplishments on National Peace Officers' Day.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF
EMERGENCY BROADCAST FREQUENCY ASSIGNMENT BILL

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 1997

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, JULIAN DIXON, and I are frustrated by the failure of the Federal Communications Commission to act on applications from emergency broadcasters to use several unused common carrier frequencies. Because we are persuaded that the allocation of these frequencies is critical to protect the safety of our constituents and our police, we are introducing legislation establishing standards to assign them to emergency broadcasters in Southern California and the State of New Hampshire. In the absence of FCC action or the prospect for any action in the near future, this avenue seems to be the only way left for us to proceed.

The South Bay Regional Communications Authority [SBRCA], one of the petitioners to the FCC, is comprised of law enforcement and public safety agencies in the cities of El Segundo, Gardena, Hawthorne, and Manhattan Beach. Three of these cities are in my Congressional district.

In June 1995, the Authority filed an application with the FCC requesting assignment and authority to use four vacant Public Land Mobile Service [PLMS] channels for critical public safety communications needs.

In an order released April 24, 1996, the Commission denied the application. The Commission cited as its reason an ongoing "refarming" proceeding that will presumably benefit the Authority by increasing the number of frequencies devoted to emergency broadcast requirements. SBRCA appealed the decision and filed an application for reconsideration. That application is still pending.

What is disturbing about the decision is the reference to the "refarming" proceeding. "Refarming" may not be completed for several more years and, once announced, may require emergency broadcasters to purchase new equipment in order to avail themselves of the increased number of frequencies. In the meantime, public safety agencies, including the South Bay Authority, have a critical need for new frequencies. At present, there are no common police and fire voice channels available for interoperability among these agencies and neighboring jurisdictions in the South Bay. According to the police chiefs in my District, interoperability and greater capacity are among the most critical problems facing the Authority now.

Because the public safety cannot wait for the Commission to finalize its "refarming" proceeding, on at least two occasions, Mr. Dixon and other members of the LA County Congressional Delegation joined me in requesting