

## SECRETARY'S COMMENTS: MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Secretary of Transportation

Washington, DC

"President Clinton is committed to 'common sense government' that serves our nation's interests," and I share his commitment. In this department, I call common sense government ONE DOT. The Marine Transportation System: Waterways, Ports, and their Intermodal Connections initiative embraces both ONE DOT and common sense government.

As we convene our first National Conference on the Marine Transportation System with federal partners and private sector organizations, including port, maritime, environment, recreation and fishing representatives, let it be the first step in working collaboratively with a "common sense" government approach toward a new effort to ensure that U.S. waterways, ports and their intermodal connections meet user needs, public expectations and the nation's needs for efficient, safe and environmentally sound transportation.

This nation was built on its waterways and ports. And, because many of us share responsibility for America's Marine Transportation System, we must make certain it is ready to compete, and win, in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I commit to do whatever it takes to make our nation's maritime industry ready for the next century. Our waterways, ports and their intermodal connections must meet the needs of a wide range of users.

By listening to you and learning, we can work together to improve the system and prepare for the tremendous growth in commerce expected in the years ahead. Transportation is the tie that binds. At DOT we are committed to upgrading our national transportation system through the work of the first National Conference on the Marine Transportation System. We have made great progress -- but the best is yet to come!

Rodney E. Slater