

soldiers displayed during WWII and we are a grateful and better nation because of him.

COMMEMORATING THE COMPLETION OF THE 103-MILE ADOPTED REGIONAL METRORAIL SYSTEM

**HON. STENY H. HOYER**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Saturday, January 6, 2001*

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this region, and indeed this Nation, can take great pride in the fact that on Saturday, January 13, 2001, the final rail transit segment of the planned 103-mile Adopted Regional Metrorail System will be put into service. This most significant milestone represents the culmination of a great dream of a visionary group of people in the 1960's that our Nation's Capital would join other great capital cities in having a rapid transit system.

Congress was a full partner in the creation of WMATA, beginning in 1952 when Congress passed the National Capital Planning Act mandating that plans be developed to facilitate movement throughout the region. In 1967, the

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority was created by Congress to build and operate a premier subway system worthy of the Nation's Capital. Every Congress and Administration since has recognized and confirmed the Federal commitment to the Metrorail and Metrobus system.

From the outset, construction of the Metrorail system was a monumental undertaking. As directed by President Lyndon Johnson, it was monumental in design, befitting the beauty and dignity of our Nation's Capital. Metro's designers used architecture that is aesthetically compatible with the history and symbolism of the capital city. Architects sought simplicity, durability, and a sense of timelessness that would serve future generations.

On January 13th, we will gather at the Branch Avenue Station in Prince George's County Maryland to symbolically drive the last spike in the 103-mile Metrorail System. We can only marvel at the handsome return on investment on the public's \$10 billion investment and remember that in today's dollars the 103-mile system would have cost \$22 billion.

Since opening day in March of 1976, more than two billion transit rides have been taken. We have revitalized communities in the vicinity of rail stations. Engineers and contractors from

throughout the nation have benefitted from jobs and construction contracts. We have reduced energy consumption, improved air quality and enhanced mobility for the transit dependent. Everyday the Metrorail and Metrobus system take thousands of people to jobs, schools, hospitals, family and other pursuits. It is virtually impossible to truly quantify the unlimited contributions our world acclaimed Metro system has made to the quality of life in the national capital region.

Metrorail ridership has been topping records over the past year. Of the top twenty-five weekday ridership records in Metrorail history, twenty-two have occurred in the last year, as Metrorail carried over well 600,000 trips on those days.

We in Congress, the region, and the Nation can be proud that we have created such a fine public transit system, worthy of our capital. The success of the beautiful Metrorail system is testament to the vision and federal-regional cooperation over the past fifty years, as well as the profound dedication of the people that designed, built and now operate the finest transit system in the world. Please join me in congratulating WMATA on achieving this awesome milestone.