
Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission

Dwight D. Eisenhower and Transportation

More than any single action by the government since the end of the war, [the Interstate Highway System] would change the face of America.... Its impact... was beyond calculation.

*--Dwight D. Eisenhower, **Mandate for Change: The White House Years** (1963)*

- **President Eisenhower is recognized as the father of the United States Interstate Highway System.** Inspired by his experience in a 1919 motorized convoy taking 62 days to cross the country, he signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act and the Highway Revenue Act in 1956, which resulted in a vast network of superhighways, radically improving the country's physical and economic infrastructure as well as its capability for defense.
- **Eisenhower played a pivotal role in the formation of the Saint Lawrence Seaway** by signing the Wiley-Dondero Act in 1954, to construct, operate and maintain the 2,350-mile shipping corridor linking the Great Lakes to Atlantic trade routes. Operated jointly through Canadian and United States waters, the system was officially opened by Eisenhower and Queen Elizabeth II in 1959.
- **President Eisenhower created the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA)** with the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, bringing together a patchwork of *ad hoc* jurisdictions and unifying the regulation of air commerce, national airspace, air travel infrastructure, air crew training and aviation safety.
- **President Eisenhower signed the National Driver Register Act in 1960**, establishing a national clearinghouse for states to share information on serious driving violations to ensure national standards of road safety.
- **Eisenhower declared that a Department of Transportation should be established** “so as to bring together at Cabinet level the presently fragmented Federal functions regarding transportation activities” (Annual Budget Message to Congress—January 16, 1961). The United States Department of Transportation was established 5 years later.
- **President Eisenhower authorized and helped choose the site for Dulles International Airport near Washington, D.C.** — the first airport designed for commercial jet aircraft. Ike authorized the airport in 1958. The new facility was named after John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's Secretary of State, who died before it was dedicated in 1962.



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