



**Stop the Coup 2025**  
a public education and mobilization campaign

**Chapter 19. Department of Transportation.** Author: Diana Furchtgott-Roth, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology at the US Department of Transportation. She worked in senior roles in the White House under presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush, where she was Chief of Staff of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Chapter 19 focuses on the importance of all forms of transportation to American prosperity and the economy in general. As Furchtgott-Roth puts it, America needs transportation that is “abundant and affordable as well as dignified, accessible, and family friendly.” The Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for transit systems and roadways and infrastructure, highway safety, aviation, air traffic control, railroads, maritime transportation (US Merchant Marine).

Unfortunately, as she describes it, the DOT has evolved from regulating forms of transportation to becoming involved in planning, developing, and building them. These roles, she argues, are best left to the private sector: private companies can charge for transportation and use the money for innovation. At the very least, federal money should be shifted to the states, who know best what their local needs are.

Current regulations have not kept up with new technologies (e.g., drones, driverless cars), and the DOT has not imagined ways to integrate these new technologies into the current system. Instead, the Biden administration has pushed electric vehicles and invested in mass transit projects that are no longer needed due to changing commuter travel patterns after the COVID-19 pandemic. She argues that the term “public transit” should be expanded to include “new micromobility solutions, ridesharing, and a possible future that includes autonomous vehicles” among mobility options: “public transit” would then refer to “transit provided for the public rather than transit provided by a public municipality.”

Furchtgott-Roth further proposes a streamlining of the department (e.g., moving the Merchant Marine to the DHS or DOD), and focuses on deregulation, private sector involvement (or at least public/private partnerships), and shifting money and responsibility to the states. For example, she suggests that fuel economy regulations placed on traditional cars (for environmental reasons) have driven up prices, causing more Americans to drive unsafe, older cars; easing those regulations would bring down prices. Deregulation of airlines would also allow for more competition and thus lower prices.

Furchtgott-Roth concludes that the role of the DOT should be to make travel easier and less expensive, to keep the US economically competitive.

**STC 2025 Commentary:** This chapter echoes the familiar conservative call for deregulation, moving federal responsibilities to the states or the private sector, and abandoning concerns about climate change. The writer assumes that free-market policies would produce innovation and better products. If followed, these proposals would, however, further undercut



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viable forms of public transit on which many depend -- particularly those in urban areas and those who cannot afford personal cars. The proposals would increase US dependence on fossil fuels, and exacerbate environmental problems.

**Chapter 19 - Key Points:**

- ✓ Increased dependence on fossil fuel
- ✓ Change concepts of “public transit” away from current “transit provided by a public municipality” to “transit provided for the public” -- opening door to private sector
- ✓ Expand public transit to include “micromobility” solutions, ridesharing, possible future autonomous vehicles
- ✓ Less federal support for large infrastructure projects
- ✓ Deregulation of major industries (especially airlines)