

Baker, Kuykendall Urge Route Ruling

CA.
P. 45

Dec. 19, 1974

From The Commercial Appeal Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18. — Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.) and Rep. Dan Kuykendall of Memphis joined Wednesday in urging retiring Transportation Secretary Claude S. Brinegar to rule on a pending proposal to route Interstate 40 through Overton Park in Memphis before he leaves office.

Brinegar's resignation, effective Feb. 1, was announced Wednesday by the White House.

Brinegar's letter of resignation was sent to the White House Tuesday but it was not announced until Wednesday.

Brinegar, 48, a former Union Oil Co. vice president, took the unusual step of announcing his departure himself. The White House said President Ford had agreed to the procedure at Brinegar's request.

Brinegar, a California native and a fan of auto racing, gave no reason for his resignation except that "Now is the time for me to return to the private sector." He said he had no plans for a new job yet but would make a decision after the first of the year.

Kuykendall said he already has talked to Brinegar. "He said he would do the best he could," Kuykendall reported. Baker was unable to reach Brinegar Wednesday.

The pending proposal, submitted to Brinegar by Gov. Winfield Dunn Oct. 3, recommends a partially depressed design, costing an estimated \$17.6 million, to complete a stalled 3.7-mile segment of Interstate 40 in Memphis. But the proposal also says the state will accept a cut-and-cover tunnel, costing an estimated \$178.4 million.

Those who want to see an end to the years-long controversy over completing Interstate 40 are hopeful the impending change in transportation secretaries will not produce new delays. A change in the office did two years ago.

In one of his last acts before he left

office, Jan. 18, 1973, to make way for Brinegar, retiring Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe rejected an earlier proposal for a partially depressed route, and so confused the record that additional litigation and delays resulted.

Speculation increased Wednesday that Brinegar's successor will be John Robson, 43, a Chicago attorney. From the standpoint of the Overton Park dispute, this could be a plus, since Robson became familiar with the case as general counsel of the Transportation Department under Secretary Alan Boyd. He left the department in February, 1969.

OPF 22-35