

OPE 29-07

# Adams Intends To Rule On I-40 Route Soon

From The Commercial Appeal  
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Tennessee's plan for closing the 3.7-mile gap in Interstate 40 in Memphis will be placed before Transportation Secretary Brock Adams by Friday, and he intends to rule on it before the end of the summer.

"I will have the report on my desk from the federal highway administrator by the 15th of this month," Adams said, "at which point, he and I will be sitting down and saying, 'All right, it will go or it won't.'"

Adams said he plans to be very careful to avoid mistakes that could lead to further prolonged litigation.

"We've already been to the Supreme Court once," he noted, "and so I've told him (the FHA administrator) I don't want any mistakes this time. I want it to be environmentally sound and I want to be certain that it is completed.

"We intend to do that this summer — make the decision and hopefully we can avoid going back to court and we can get the matter completed."

Adams, in a taped interview with Rep. Jim Guy Tucker (D-Ark.), said, "What we're trying to balance is how we go through that park doing as small amount of injury as possible to the city of Memphis, which could be cut in half under the original proposal."

The state's plan calls for a so-called "plaza design" that would depress I-40 as

it passes through Overton Park, with attention given to beautifying the area and minimizing noise and air pollution.

The state submitted its plan during the Ford administration but then withdrew it, waiting for Carter to take office.

Under federal environmental laws, a federal-aid highway may not encroach upon a public park unless the secretary of transportation determines there is no "prudent and feasible" alternative and that the design for the road minimizes environmental damage.

These are the determinations Adams told Tucker he will make this summer.

In questioning Adams about the Memphis expressway problem, Tucker observed that the 3.7-mile gap is of concern to people in Arkansas who use I-40 through Memphis.

Tucker pointed out I-40 is complete "from Fort Smith virtually to the Atlantic Ocean" except for the gap in Memphis.

CA.

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