

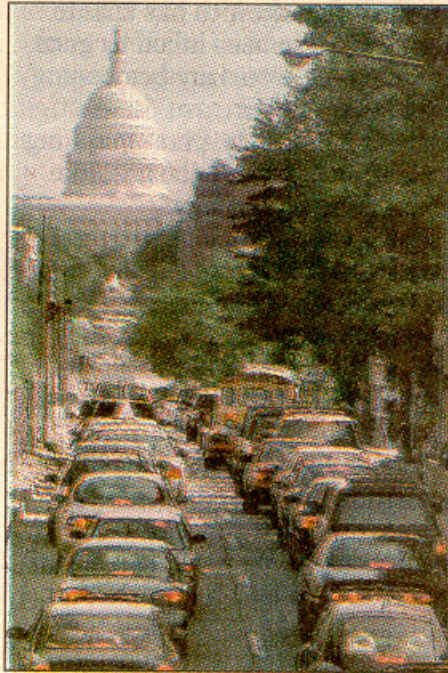
News Flash: Traffic Here Is Congested

Tape this one to the refrigerator, or maybe the dashboard: Traffic in the Washington metropolitan area is bad. A survey said so this week.

In this year's ranking of the most wretched cities in which to commute, the Washington area actually dropped a spot from the previous listing, to third overall. But experts at the Texas Transportation Institute, which conducted this year's survey based on 1999 data, say it's not because things are better here. Rather, the San Francisco-Oakland area—which had been tied with the D.C. area for second—grew slightly worse and claimed sole possession of the second spot.

On nearly every index of car traffic, the D.C. region was among the nation's worst. Those included traffic congestion, the amount of extra time needed during rush hour and the amount of time people waste in traffic jams.

"By every human measure, traffic congestion is far worse today than it has been in recent years," said Bob Marbourg, a Washington



FILE PHOTO/BY LUCIAN PERKINS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Read it and weep: a typical rush-hour backup on North Capitol Street. The D.C. area ranks third worst in traffic.

traffic reporter for WTOP radio since 1979.

The survey gave ammunition to groups pushing one or another of the area's grand transportation ideas—a "techway" crossing over the Potomac River west of the American Legion Bridge, Metro train service to Tysons Corner or an intercounty connector in Montgomery County.