

Mr. PRISK. Well, the Bureau of Public Roads has been receptive to proposals and has urged proposals to correct existing faults and existing sections of the Interstate System as well as incorporate desirable improvements in new sections yet to be built, and the essence of our most recent instructions to the field include both approaches; namely, to improve sections yet to be built and to go back on sections that are still deficient, and to make corrections there with Federal aid participation.

Mr. CRAMER. How can you encourage the States to do this, though? They get a certain allocation of money; they spend that money for construction or for modification of existing highways.

They are going to want to build more miles, basically, are they not?

Mr. PRISK. Well, the law leaves the initiative with the States.

Mr. CRAMER. I understand that. How can we encourage them to get interested in safety, particularly relating to already built highways.

Mr. PRISK. Well, I think through the medium of this hearing there would be some interest. We have seen some turnaround, Mr. Congressman, as a result of our activities and these visits; corrections have been made.

Mr. CRAMER. Well, I urge further, and I bring this out because the committee, I think, is going to have to give some consideration to it, the legislative Subcommittee on Roads, anyway. The General Accounting Office has issued a ruling that once an Interstate highway is built to standard, has been approved, finalized, when you go back to do any modifications or improvements, Federal 90-10 Interstate funds cannot be used, and the cost sharing is reduced to the 50-50 ratio. Now that is not going to be any encouragement to the States to go back on a 50-50 matching basis and improve already existing Interstate highways from a safety standpoint, is it?

Mr. PRISK. I believe that there have been cases, Mr. Cramer, where 90-10 money has been used to correct existing deficiencies on the Interstate System.

Mr. CRAMER. Well, just a minute. I want to finish that point. That would only be in the case where the Bureau made a determination that the construction had not actually been completed; in those lengths where the Bureau determined it was completed, then it would be 50-50 matching, would it not?

Mr. PRISK. This is possible.

Mr. CRAMER. That is true, is it not?

Mr. PRISK. Yes, that is true.

Mr. CRAMER. Well, that presents a serious problem, does it not?

Mr. PRISK. Yes, I am sure it does.

Mr. CRAMER. The State is not going to take 50-50 money for improving a presently completed Interstate highway for safety purposes when they can get 90-10 money for new construction. That is a considerable deterrent, is it not?

Mr. PRISK. I am sure it would make a difference.

Mr. CRAMER. Well, I think it is quite obvious then that one approach the legislative committee ought to consider is that the Congress might feel that on safety projects the State should continue to be able to get 90-10 matching for the specific purpose of safety features on existing Interstate highways.