

MAY 8, 1967.

DEAR _____: By means of this letter, I call to your attention the recently issued American Association of State Highway Officials report entitled "Highway Design and Operational Practices Related to Highway Safety". The Bureau of Public Roads concurs fully in the report's recommendations and conclusions and considers it to be one of the most important documents ever developed by the joint efforts of the Bureau of Public Roads and AASHO. We wish to assist every State highway department in applying its findings beginning as soon as possible in 1967 and continuing on a large scale for as long as is necessary to provide the highest possible level of roadway safety on the Federal-aid highway systems. We pledge to you such assistance as is necessary to allow the State highway departments to plan and program the use of Federal-aid funds to expedite the accomplishment of this objective.

The report makes particular recommendations dealing with roadside hazards, which constitute a major contribution to the annual traffic toll. Work items such as are discussed in Chapter III of the AASHO document under "Roadside Design and Appurtenances" may be minor at individual spots but large when viewed on the basis of a full route. The required corrective work is of a nature that it can generally be readily and economically performed by State forces. Therefore if so proposed by a State highway department, Public Roads will find that the corresponding Federal-aid projects for use of State forces to accomplish this work are in the public interest. In accordance with statutory controls you of course know that Federal-aid funds cannot participate in costs of work classified as maintenance. But there *can* be participation with Federal-aid primary, secondary and urban funds in work that classifies as reconstruction, or construction; and Federal-aid Interstate funds for additional construction on previously constructed projects on Interstate System highways, and it will therefore be our purpose to permit full regular Federal-aid participation in this program, which will accelerate achievement of work of the kinds outlined in Public Roads Instructional Memorandum 21-6-66, August 1, 1966, subject "Safety Provisions for Roadside Features and Appurtenances".

There should also be continuation and acceleration of a program for the types of improvements that are described in Public Roads Policy and Procedure Memorandum 21-16, January 18, 1966, subject "Highway Safety Improvement Projects", and extensively discussed in the cited AASHO document.

A conference on this subject was held on April 25-27 with the design engineers of Public Roads. They and the division engineers are being advised that they are to assist in all possible ways toward the development and implementation of Federal-aid projects to achieve in the shortest possible time increased safety for the users of the Federal-aid highways.

The Bureau is placing its full support and resources behind a concentrated major effort to implement the recommendations of the AASHO report and I earnestly solicit your own support in this joint effort. I therefore urge you as the Chief Administrative Officer of your State highway department to examine fully the recommendations of the AASHO report to determine from a safety viewpoint those features of existing highways which constitute hazards to highway users; and to establish an active corrective program along the lines which the report suggests.

I know of course that each of you has a staggering list of needed work, both with and without Federal-aid funds. However, I consider that available Federal-aid highway funds can be put to no better or more urgent use today than in the very prompt initiation of a broad program to increase the safety of public highways. Conscientious and special personal attention to such a program is not only our responsibility; but at the same time it is an opportunity to perform a humane public service, and to demonstrate once again that we as highway officials are concerned with objectives that transcend the mere movement of people and goods.

This is the first communication to you under my new title in the infant Department of Transportation. I know how busy you are and how many urgent priority items there are to claim your attention; I shall not be imposing on your time very often in this manner; but the overwhelming importance of this subject impels me to do so in this instance. We shall be sending through the normal channels such memoranda as appear necessary to aid in implementing this program; but I want you to know that our purpose will be to remove every possible hindrance to your being able to cooperate effectively in this important endeavor.