

and the chief administrative official of a department to correct or to accomplish.

The highway departments are involved in a spot improvement program that can enhance traffic safety and we intend to continue this activity.

We are involved in research efforts. Some of these projects are carried on through the national cooperative highway research program financed with pooled funds from the several State highway departments.

The program is administered through the Highway Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering. Attached is a listing of research projects dealing with safety that have been initiated since our research program was started in 1963.

Groups of States have pooled funds or have worked individually to research breakaway supports for highway signs and light standards, improve guardrail design and to determine wind loads on highway signs as they affect supporting structure design. Our committee on bridges and structures is currently working on the matter of the structural design of sign supports and adequacy, appearance, and safety in mind.

In many places, overhead sign structures are absolutely necessary. Their supports must be located and protected to enhance safety, yet they must be structurally dependable. If one were to collapse on a high-speed highway, the results could be catastrophic.

It is our feeling that some of the industries supplying products have lagged in their responsibility to develop safer highway elements.

Recently, when we appeared before your parent House Public Works Committee on the matter of the next Federal-aid highway program, we indicated that emphasis in the next program should be placed on improving urban highway facilities, modernizing our vast rural primary network, and in improving our rural secondary system.

Just as we started the development of design standards for the interstate program some years in advance, we have already started our appropriate committees on developing design standards for this next program.

We assure you, however, as worthwhile improvements might be evolved, that they will immediately be incorporated into current design work, and not wait until the next Federal-aid highway program is authorized.

At this time we make brief reference to the new highway safety standards issued on June 27 by the Department of Transportation. Only a week ago, most of the State highway departments had not yet seen these standards, and could not comment on them.

As a result, we requested sufficient copies from the National Highway Safety Bureau to send to the State highway departments.

In the original draft form, the safety standards made reference to AASHO design standards and policies as those to be used in the highways safety program. We were surprised that the final standards makes no reference to the AASHO material, but instead carried a notation, "Standards applicable to the specific programs are those issued or endorsed by the Federal Highway Administrator."