

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

PROGRAM.—FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS (LIQUIDATION OF CONTRACT AUTHORIZATION)

A. Statutory or administrative authority for the program

Grants are made to States for construction and improvement of Federal-aid highways. Authorizations are provided in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 and subsequent highway legislation to cover 90 percent of the costs of completing the 41,000-mile National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, and to match State funds on a 50-50 basis for the primary, secondary, and urban programs. The Federal share of project costs is increased in those States with large areas of public domain. Payments to the States for work done are made out of the highway trust fund, into which are deposited certain Federal excise tax receipts on motor fuel, tires and tubes, tread rubber, trucks, buses, trailers, truck use, truck parts and accessories, and on lubricating oil used in highway vehicles.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 and subsequent biennial acts authorize appropriations for the interstate program, and also provide revenues to finance these authorizations. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966 provided \$1 billion for each of the years 1968 and 1969 to continue the Federal-aid primary, secondary, and urban programs; and provided increased authorization for the Interstate System for 1968-72, inclusive. All authorizations are available for use in the year prior to the year for which authorized.

B. Output

As of March 31, 1968, almost 25,900 miles of the 41,000-mile Interstate System were open to traffic. Approximately 91 percent (23,587 miles) was built or improved under the Federal-aid interstate program, most of it under the 90 percent Federal, 10 percent State matching program launched in 1956. Toll roads, bridges and tunnels incorporated in the system totaled 2,305 miles. In addition to the sections open to traffic, 5,678 miles were under construction with interstate funds, and engineering or right-of-way acquisition was in progress on another 8,494 miles. Thus some form of work was underway or completed on 40,064 of the 41,000-mile system—about 98 percent of the total system mileage.

Construction projects involving 221,005 miles in the regular Federal-aid program (primary, secondary, and urban) have been completed since July 1, 1956, at a total cost of \$18.32 billion; and contracts involving 15,394 miles at a cost of \$3.34 billion were authorized or underway on March 31, 1968. In addition \$1.39 billion of engineering and right-of-way acquisition work had been completed, and \$729 million was underway.

In addition, the following accomplishments have been achieved by the use of existing resources within the framework of present law to:

1. Eliminate highway conditions that are potentially dangerous involving "spot improvements" such as the widening of bridges, traffic lanes and shoulders; realining curves and slopes for better sight distance, reconstruction and channelization of intersections; installing uniform control devices; installation of guardrails; and railroad grade crossing elimination and protection: 13,872 highway safety improvement projects have been programed or completed costing a total of \$1,004,854,000; 3,854 of the "spot improvement" safety projects are Federal aid at a total cost of \$708,334,000 of which the Federal share is \$358,504,000.

The remaining 10,018 projects were completed with State funds alone at a cost of \$296,520,000.

2. Increase the utilization of existing streets in cities of 5,000 population or greater through a "Traffic Operations Program To Increase Capacity and Safety," the TOPICS program. The purpose of this program is to make better use of our existing streets and highways in the urban areas by increasing their traffic-carrying ability and improving their safety:

Federal, State, and/or local funds have been committed and active projects are underway in 24 cities. Interest has been expressed and the program is being pursued in almost every State.

3. Promote the establishment of a comprehensive planning process in urban areas of over 50,000 population:

A heavy emphasis is being placed on urban transportation planning. Since July 1, 1967, no highway project can be approved in any urban area of over 50,000 population unless it is based on a continuing comprehensive transportation