and have a uniform matching ratio for all Federal-aid system programs, based on the capabilities of the composite State highway department to match the Federal funds, but with the sliding scale provisions continuing for the public land States.

One of the greatest reasons for the success of the Federal-aid highway program in the United States has been the ability of the State highway departments to plan their programs, provide necessary matching funds, and to make necessary commitments to involved property owners and public officials at the various levels of government on the basis of the congressional authorizations.

In other words, we refer to the "contractual obligation" feature of the Federal-aid program that became part of it in 1922. From that time on, we have been able to use the authorization as a basis for our planning. Without "contractual obligation," the program would have faltered.

In the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, the so-called Byrd amendment prohibited expenditures in excess of the capability of the trust fund to finance.

In 1959, a point was reached in our highway program where expenditures under the original schedule of authorizations exceeded the trust fund receipts, so a rescheduling of authorizations and a revision of the trust fund receipts had to be undertaken by Congress.

Inasmuch as the balance between expenditures and the trust fund capabilities was a rather sensitive one, it brought into being a process developed by the Bureau of the Budget and the Bureau of Public Roads, called reimbursement planning or contract control operation.

This involved a quarterly control over program obligations, so that reimbursements to the highway departments from the trust fund would never exceed the capabilities of that fund.

This operation, for the first time, brought into being in the highway program a quarterly control procedure. Since that time, there has been an increasing amount of complexity in administering the program, and within recent years a certain amount of uncertainty has become a part of the process.

At least the highway departments have been kept guessing to a certain degree as to when fiscal year apportionments will be made, when quarterly allotments will be announced, and in what amounts, and to say the least, the program has been kept off balance.

The so-called cutbacks of 1966, and the present one, have added to this uncertainty.

It takes at least 4 years to develop a project before it can go to contract. During that time, a great deal of planning and engineering work must take place and commitments must be made to the affected parties and agencies.

The highway program is so big, and a State highway department is such a complex organization, that letting dates and the projects involved in those lettings must be scheduled months in advance. The uncertainty and the off-balance features that we have mentioned can cause many problems in necessary rescheduling caused by slowdowns in the program that are not in conformity to congressional authorizations.