

STATEMENT OF NATIONAL JOINT HEAVY AND HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS ON THE ABC HIGHWAY
SYSTEM

Gentlemen, the National Joint Heavy and Highway Construction Committee is vitally interested in those matters which affect the members of these six International Unions on highway construction throughout the United States. These six International Unions are the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Laborers' International Union of North America, the Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association of the United States and Canada, the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers' International Union of America and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America, who have a total membership of 3.8 million of which hundreds of thousands are employed and dependent on highway construction for their livelihood. We are pleased with this opportunity to express their views of this nation's primary and secondary highway systems and their urban extensions known as the ABC System.

THE IMPORT OF THE ABC PROGRAM

Since 1916, the Federal Government has had a Highway Program; the main thrust has been towards a highway of an interstate nature. With the passage of the 1956 Highway Act, this country embarked on the largest public works project known to man, the National System of Interstate Defense Roads. However, recognizing that at the completion of the Interstate System, these roads will carry only 25% of the nation's traffic.

Congress, for the past decade, has progressively increased the annual authorized level of Federal Aid Highway Funds to this primary and secondary urban road system. For the years 1966 to 1969, \$1 billion annually will be available to the ABC Program.

We are pleased with the concern of Congress for the ABC System and especially for the most recent attention paid to the urban roads. These roads are necessary to any integrated system of inter and intrastate highways. We also concur with the recommendations of Secretary of Transportation, Alan S. Boyd, that more attention should be paid by all interested parties in developing an urban road system that is compatible with the social and economic needs of four urban areas. By 1990, more than 200 million people will be living in this country's urban areas; this is more than the total population of this fifty states.

THE ABC SYSTEM'S IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT

Recognizing our responsibilities as representatives of organized labor, we would like to emphasize the importance of the ABC System as it is related to employment.

There will be, through the partnership of the Federal and 50 States' Governments, in funding for the years 1966 through 1969, a total of \$2 billion annually for the ABC System. Using the 1966 report of the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics on labor requirements for construction of Federal Aid Highways, this \$2 billion will generate, annually, employment for 230 thousand people in manufacturing, transportation, trade, mining and other related industries. Of these 230 thousand potential jobs, over 40% will be available to construction workers.

Considering the recommendations of Secretary Boyd, of the nation's needs for greater attention towards the citizens of our urban areas, let us consider the needs for greater employment opportunities in the urban areas.

In 1967, one-third of all unemployed workers lived in this nation's fifteen larger cities. The unemployment rate in our cities is generally greater than the national average especially among minority groups in unskilled workers. Increased highway construction in the metropolitan areas in this country will provide employment opportunities for this segment of our population, now one of the main concerns of this country's "War on Poverty." The highway construction industry can train these people and upgrade them in the mainstream of this country's economy.