

STATEMENT OF BURTON F. MILLER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ROAD BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, my name is Burton F. Miller, and I am the Executive Vice President of the American Road Builders' Association, with headquarters in Washington, D.C.

We are a national federation of highway interests, embracing all facets of the vast national highway program. Our membership is a cross-section of the industry and highway engineering profession, composed of highway officials at all levels of government, highway contractors, manufacturers and distributors of construction equipment, producers and suppliers of highway materials, engineers, educators and students.

Mr. Chairman, we very much appreciate this opportunity to comment on the legislation before this committee, both the Administration's bill, H.R. 17134, and the bill sponsored by Chairman Fallon and Chairman Kluczynski, H.R. 16994.

In studying the various proposals contained in this legislation, and having heard the testimony of the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administrator before this Subcommittee last Thursday, we are impressed by the fact that the legislation incorporates a number of innovations, almost all of which would result in added costs to the Highway Trust Fund, and that, in the absence of any real prospect that the revenue sources of the Highway Trust Fund will be augmented in the near future, these added costs will, as a practical matter, result in a decrease in the amount of money available for the Interstate program.

It is evident, therefore, that this Committee is confronted with a question of priorities.

Which of the innovations are of such importance and urgency that they should now be adopted at the expense of Interstate construction? And which can properly be deferred until such time as additional funds are placed in the Highway Trust Fund to pay for them?

We believe that an order of priorities should be determined, through careful study, prior to the enactment of legislation which would place additional burdens on the Highway Trust Fund. We realize that a study such as we are proposing would delay the enactment of the legislation until 1969.

But only a few sections of the bill are essential this year. Authorizations should be made for the ABC program for the fiscal years 1970 and 1971, so that the regular apportionments can be made this year.

The 1968 Interstate cost estimate should be accepted as the basis for the Interstate apportionments for the same two fiscal years. And authorizations should be made to permit the continuation of the existing programs for the improvement of roads in the Federal domain.

Let me now turn to the specifics of the legislation before you.

With regard to the Interstate program, we share the general pessimism as to the date of completion of the Interstate System. We can only hope that the Vietnam War situation will be resolved in the not too distant future, and that we will then be able to accelerate lagging domestic programs. With that hope in mind, we disagree with the Administration's view that the Interstate program should be stretched out by adding authorizations for fiscal years 1973 and 1974. This would be tantamount to scheduling a new completion date of 1978. We can't afford this extravagance.

We suggest that the Interstate authorizations contained in existing law remain unchanged, and that this Committee reschedule this matter for consideration in the next session.

As to the ABC program, the American Road Builders' Association is on record as favoring an increase of the annual authorizations to \$1.5 billion annually, an increase of \$500 million.

These authorizations should be considered in relation to, and in conjunction with, the proposed authorizations for TOPICS (Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety).

It has been fairly obvious for some years that the ABC program is less than adequate. The needs of the cities and suburban areas are acute. More Federal-aid highway funds should be channeled to meet these needs. However, we also have equally pressing rural needs, on the regular Federal-aid primary and secondary routes. On many of these routes, little has been done to improve their capacity and safety in the last 10 to 15 years.