

We have advocated that the ABC authorizations be increased in amounts at least sufficient to reflect rising unit construction costs, and the added costs which come about due to improved safety standards and greater emphasis on environmental quality.

In the legislation before you, the Administration has asked that TOPICS be funded at the level of \$250 million per year. The TOPICS money, added to the \$250 million regularly allocated to urban construction under the ABC formula, would double the Federal-aid funds available for the construction of non-Interstate highways.

We believe that this increase in urban funds should be accompanied by an increase in the funds authorized for the rural Federal-aid roads. We propose, therefore, that the TOPICS authorization be accompanied by the authorization of an additional \$250 million for each of the two fiscal years 1970 and 1971 to augment the apportionments for the Federal-aid primary and secondary systems.

The proposal would have this effect:

The authorization for the rural primary program would be increased from \$450 million to \$600 million.

The authorization for the rural secondary program would be increased from \$300 million to \$400 million.

The authorization for the urban extensions thereto would be increased from \$250 million to \$500 million.

As will be noted in the accompanying table, the percentage increase for urban improvements would be 100 percent while the increase for other categories would be 33½ percent.

ARBA PROPOSAL TO INCREASE ABC PROGRAM AUTHORIZATIONS

[In millions of dollars]

	Present	Proposed	Percent increase
F-A primary.....	450	600	33½
F-A secondary.....	300	400	33½
F-A urban.....	250	500	100
Total.....	1,000	1,500	50

It may seem inconsistent for us to come before this Committee recommending an increase in the ABC program authorizations at a time when highway construction levels are being limited administratively. As Secretary Boyd advised the Committee last Thursday, another substantial cutback in the highway program is under consideration in connection with the surtax legislation now pending in Congress.

We deplore these cutbacks. In the long run, we believe, they increase the costs of highway construction by disrupting the programs of the highway departments and the long-range planning of the industry. Program disruption, in our view, is equivalent to economic waste. We shall continue to express this position, as forcefully as we can.

Our proposed increase in the ABC program is within the capability of the Highway Trust Fund. We believe it should be made in spite of the prospects of continued cutbacks, with the hope that it will be possible to put the entire Federal-aid highway authorization to work before the 1969 construction season begins.

The highway safety, highway safety research and highway beautification programs are presently funded from the general fund of the Treasury. The Highway Trust Fund is not in a position to sustain them. While this is perhaps not the appropriate time to discuss the logical source of funds for these programs, we wish to take this opportunity to make a few general observations.

First, the highway beautification program suffers, we believe, from unfortunate terminology. We are speaking, to a large extent, of a kind of work that was known for many years as roadside development. A term now coming into vogue, somewhat pretentious, perhaps, but otherwise acceptable, is "environmental quality improvement."

Whatever it may be called, the program consists largely of efforts to improve the quality of the driving environment and thus improve the efficiency of the process of driving a vehicle. The provision of visual reference points, to enable the driver to better judge distances; the elimination of distractions, the leveling