

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, and hence retard the progress of the Interstate System.

We realize, Mr. Chairman, that such a study as we are suggesting would delay the enactment of many of the new proposals before this committee until 1969.

But, in our opinion, only a few sections of the bill are essential insofar as enactment is concerned 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. This is a must.

The 1968 Interstate cost estimate should be accepted as the basis for the Interstate apportionments for the same 2 fiscal years, and authorizations should be made to permit the continuation of existing programs for the improvement of local and Federal domain roads.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if I may turn to some of the specifics of the legislation before the committee.

Referring 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.

Mr. Chairman, this would be tantamount to scheduling a new completion date of 1978. In the opinion of the American Road Builders Association, we cannot afford any such extravagance.

We suggest, therefore, that the Interstate authorizations contained in existing law remain unchanged, and that this committee reschedule this matter for consideration in the next session of Congress, presumably under more definitive and favorable conditions.

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.

This has previously been presented to your committee in the form of a resolution from the 1968 convention of the American Road Builders Association.

However, these authorizations should be considered in relation to and in conjunction with the proposed authorizations for TOPICS.

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.