

way systems within metropolitan areas has been badly neglected as intercity routes, principally the Interstate System, have been brought up to high standards. Ultimately the Federal aid system should be reoriented into the State, urban and rural systems called for in the February 20 statements. Presently we believe that the following actions are necessary.

Authorization and appropriation of at least the current \$1 billion funding level for the ABC system in fiscal years 1970 and 1971 is required to continue even minimal improvements in street and highway systems essential to move traffic in and around urban areas.

The 1968 National Highway Needs Report emphasizes that it is in urban areas where highway systems most urgently require improvement. A survey conducted by the American Association of State Highway Officials concludes that approximately 34.7 percent of current ABC appropriations are spent in urban areas. While this percentage is significant and a great improvement over allocations in earlier years of the program, it is still far from sufficient to keep pace with the growing need to provide urban areas with comprehensive highway systems. Consequently, any interruption or reduction in the flow of ABC money would certainly compound an already difficult local traffic and financial situation.

In addition to continuation of the ABC program, we believe that implementation of a new program aimed specifically at improving traffic flow in urban areas must begin at this time. We have been pleased with statements of officials of the Department of Transportation, from the Secretary on down, recognizing the problems of urban areas and the desirableness of local determination of transportation problems and requirements.

Also the American Association of State Highway Officials in a statement delivered to this committee this week states that the pressing needs of urban areas require action as soon as possible to establish a program to aid urban street and highway systems. They note that there is need for a program to support both construction and engineering improvements.

The proposal by DOT would expand the TOPICS program. Such action would aid some improvements in traffic flow in urban areas, but we do not believe that this is sufficient. A program must be implemented which will allow officials a range of choice in making highway improvements by supporting not only the engineering improvements aided by TOPICS but also construction and relocation of roadways where such action is deemed necessary. As AASHO notes, the emphasis of any new urban program will be on improvements to existing rights-of-way; however, the alternative of new construction must be left open for consideration. The financial support TOPICS can give may induce State and local officials to choose engineering improvements in existing roadways when really reconstruction or relocation of the roadway, or construction of an entirely new facility would be the best means to alleviate the particular traffic problem.

Highway improvements in urban areas have been long deferred in pending completion of the Interstate System, but the sorry condition of many city major street and highway systems demands that the most critical of the needed improvements be delayed no