

Also, Mr. Chairman, I made available for the members of the committee a reproduction of the Columbus Evening Dispatch, Saturday, December 16, 1967, that has to do very vividly with the collapse of the Point Pleasant Bridge, which connects West Virginia and Ohio. I thought it might be of value to you, Mr. Chairman, and members of your committee.

Mr. HOWARD. Thank you.

Without objection, that will be made a part of the subcommittee file.

Mr. KEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I do fully agree with you that the construction of an Interstate System and all Federal-aid highways should be expedited in the most reasonable manner possible. This strong belief is due to our continually increasing traffic, which grows each day.

Because of existing highways as we have them as of today, I do oppose amending section 127 of title 23 of the United States Code which proposes to increase vehicle weight as well as to increase width limitations.

Now, while the drivers of the huge trucks upon our highways are most courteous—they are the safest drivers in America today—our highways are not wide enough now to accommodate either the proposed additional width or the proposed additional length which has been suggested.

I would like to depart at this moment, Mr. Chairman, to say on two separate occasions, my wife was returning from taking our daughters to college when her car would break down. It has been the drivers of these large trucks, they were gracious enough to stop and give her the assistance that she needed, and so I have a deep feeling of gratitude to them. And in each case she got the name and I wrote both company and the driver a thank you note for what they did for my wife.

My primary concern is safety.

It is my understanding that the 12-foot traffic lanes of the Interstate System were adopted to provide safety and comfortable driving on highways being used by vehicles 96 inches—8 feet—wide, and traveling at relatively high speeds. It was recognized that on highways having lane widths of less than 12 feet, slower speeds would have to govern and greater driving care would be necessary. The proposed change to 102 inches—that is 8½ feet—infringes on the freedom from tension which we have tried to build into our roads, even on the 12-foot lanes, and introduces an additional element of danger on roads with lane widths of less than 12 feet.

I would like to digress to state in my own State of West Virginia last year, we had the highest road fatalities in the history of our home State. This year we are now running, according to the most recent information I have from West Virginia, approximately 22 highway deaths above what we experienced last year.

In understand that in 1966, of 413,816 miles of rural, primary, and State highways; 254,902 miles, or 61.6 percent, had lane widths of less than 12 feet and 192,395 miles, or 46.7 percent, had lane widths of 10.5 feet or less; 79,812 miles, or 19.4 percent, actually had lane widths