

And on my immediate right is Richard A Lill, our chief highway engineer.

We are here to plead for a moderate thawing of the weight freeze which, since 1956, has stymied advances in motor truck technology for more than a decade—a decade during which other forms of transportation have made significant technological strides.

The industry we represent fully recognizes and understands the need for sound controls on the weights and sizes of motor vehicles operating on the public highways.

Such controls have been enforced by the States for almost as long as motor vehicles have existed.

The Federal Government did not become involved in this field of regulation until 1956, when Congress enacted the legislation providing for construction of the 41,000-mile Interstate and Defense Highway System.

Congressional intervention in this field of regulation was explained in the 1956 report of the House Committee on Public Works, as follows:

The committee recognizes that maximum weight limitations for vehicles using the highways are fundamentally a problem of State regulation, but feels that if the Federal Government is to pay 90 percent of the cost of Interstate System improvements it is entitled to protection of the investment against damage caused by heavy loads on the highway \* \* \*

In 1956, about the only thing Congress had available to it as a guide was a set of standards which had been adopted 10 years earlier by the American Association of State Highway Officials, and designed to protect the road systems being built in 1946 and before.

Although these 1946 AASHO standards were considered more restrictive than necessary to protect the projected Interstate System, our industry found comfort in the fact that Congress, at the same time, instructed the Bureau of Public Roads to study the problem and submit its recommendations for changes not later than March 1, 1959.

Unfortunately, the Bureau's study was delayed several times and, instead of being submitted by March 1, 1959, it was not forthcoming until August 1964.

As a result, the present Federal limits—borrowed from a set of standards written 22 years ago—have not been in effect for 12 years, without relief.

In its 1964 report to Congress, the Bureau recommended changes in the four existing Federal restrictions as follows:

Increase the width limits from 96 inches to 102 inches.

Increase the 18,000-pound single-axle limit to 20,000 pounds.

Increase the 32,000-pound tandem-axle limit to 34,000 pounds.

Change the flat maximum gross weight of 73,280 pounds to a formula that would determine gross weight according to the number of axles and the number of feet separating such axles.

The bill originally introduced in the Senate by Senator Warren Magnuson and 21 other western Senators, and the companion introduced in the House by Chairman Kluczynski and 10 other Members of the House, departed from the Bureau's recommendations to the extent of proposing a 36,000-pound tandem axle limit and a somewhat more liberal gross weight formula.

However, before the legislation was passed by the Senate, it was amended to bring it precisely in line with the recommendations of the