

weight as temporary standards pending a study which the Department of Commerce was expected to complete in 1959 but which was not transmitted to the Congress until August, 1964.

The most recent AASHO recommendation on motor vehicle width reads as follows:

"No vehicle, including any load and load-holding devices thereon, using completed sections of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways shall exceed a width of 102 inches, excluding both tire bulge and approved safety devices. Further use of the 102-inch maximum width shall not be applicable on other routes in a State unless the State's highway system is predominantly of sufficient lane width for safe accommodation of vehicles of such width."⁴

By 1966 highways with lanes 12 feet wide and over had risen from 10 percent of total rural primary mileage in 1946 to 41 percent. Highway lane-width trends during the period 1937-1966 are shown in the table appended to this statement.

The 96-inch width limitation does not prevent a State from permitting buses of greater width to operate over highways which are not part of the Interstate System. Most of the States permit buses exceeding 96 inches in width to be operated in local and suburban service. Eight States permit operation of intercity buses exceeding 96 inches in width over designated highways. Ten States—Idaho, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming—have enacted legislation which will permit 102-inch-wide buses to use the Interstate System if the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 is amended as proposed in H.R. 14474.

Approval of H.R. 14474 would not permit wider vehicles to be operated over any portion of the Interstate System unless such operation were permitted under State law. Regulation of vehicle sizes and weights would continue to be primarily the responsibility of the several States. If the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 were amended as proposed, a State could permit buses not exceeding 102 inches in width to use the Interstate System within its borders, but any State, if it so desired, could prohibit the operation of buses exceeding 96 inches in width.

If the proposed legislation is approved, it would not be possible for intercity motor carriers of passengers to make extensive use of wider buses unless a large number of States conclude that the operation of such vehicles over the Interstate System and other improved highways within their borders is consistent with safety and with the convenience of the general public. It is not economically feasible for intercity motor bus operators to confine the operation of new equipment to isolated States. Thus, any benefit that bus carriers might derive from the proposed Federal legislation is dependent on the enactment of implementing legislation by a number of contiguous States.

We recognize that there are still some roads in some States, particularly in mountainous terrain, which are not sufficiently wide to accommodate wider vehicles. The great advantage of the proposed legislation is that each State would be permitted to open the Interstate System to 102-inch wide vehicles but would retain full power to prohibit the use of such vehicles on its narrow highways. For example, legislation approved on April 2, 1968, by the General Assembly of Virginia provides that if the Federal limitation on the width of buses is increased from 96 to 102 inches, the State Highway Commission may permit buses not exceeding 102 inches in width to be operated "on federal interstate and defense highways or any other four-lane divided highways . . ." and may permit such operation "between the aforesaid highways and the passenger bus terminals. . . ."

If the proposed legislation is enacted, the intercity bus industry is prepared to invest millions of dollars to provide its passengers with wider, safer, and more comfortable equipment. NAMBO's other witness, Mr. H. Vance Greenslit, is here to explain the increased safety and comfort which can be provided by making buses just six inches wider.

⁴ *Recommended Policy on Maximum Dimensions and Weights of Motor Vehicles To Be Operated Over the Highways of the United States*, American Association of State Highway Officials, page 11 (1968).