

these large city areas. I am most sympathetic to their problems and believe greater efforts must be made in these large cities to solve the traffic problems. On the other hand, there are literally thousands of urban areas similar to the medium-sized one in my particular district where there are also highway transportation problems which must be met. Highways are vital to our transportation needs and the present program is not adequate to solve these needs.

In making these comments, I am in no way critical of either the present federal highway program or the highway program of my State of Washington. The present federal-aid highway program, including the Interstate, is well-conceived, and I congratulate the Congress on the wisdom it has shown over the years in assisting the states in solving their transportation problems. Our State Highway Department in Washington is doing its very best within its available funds, but needs are rapidly outstripping the funds available to build more highways. This is my real purpose in being here today.

Before outlining my views on what I feel a future highway program should encompass, I should tell you what we are doing in the State of Washington to help ourselves in solving the highway transportation problems. As in the case of all of the other states, we are heavily dependent upon federal-aid funds to build our highways, but at the same time we have not sat waiting for the federal government to solve all of our problems.

In 1963, the Washington State Legislature enacted a Priority Programming Act which provides for the development of our state highways in Washington on a priority basis. All of our highways are classified according to their importance and the major amount of available state highway funds are used to improve the highways of greatest importance to the state. We believe this Priority Programming Act is one of the best-conceived systems in the country for putting highway dollars where they are needed most.

Despite the fact that the State of Washington was tied with two or three other states for the highest state gasoline tax in the Nation prior to 1967, our 1967 Legislature chose to increase the state gasoline tax by 1½ cents, up to 9 cents per gallon. Without a doubt, we now have the highest gasoline tax of any state in the Nation. This substantial increase in our gasoline tax was not easy to come by, but was recognized as an absolute necessity in order to partially relieve traffic congestion in the urban areas of our state. In fact, the funds derived from the 1½ cent increase in our gasoline tax are specifically earmarked to improve state highways, county roads and city arterials in the urban areas of our state having populations of 5,000 or more people. In order to complete the program as soon as practical, the revenues from the 1½ cent gasoline tax increase will be utilized to back up two \$200 million bond issues to improve the highways, roads and streets in the urban areas with the idea that the whole program will be completed in six to ten years. Again, I believe the State of Washington has faced up to the problem of traffic congestion and is doing its part to overcome the problem. We sincerely hope that the Congress will assist us further. Although our state program will help a great deal toward solving our problem, much remains to be done.

Over the past several years, the economy and population of the State of Washington has been increasing at an extremely rapid rate, and our need for highways has increased by leaps and bounds. We are anxiously awaiting completion of the Interstate system with the hope that the very large amount of highway dollars going into the Interstate can be diverted for the improvement of our primary and secondary highway system.

As somewhat of a layman legislator, it would be presumptuous for me to attempt to come before this Committee with a specific and detailed proposal for a federal-aid highway program after completion of the Interstate program. For instance, my community would be delighted to have an Interstate highway built in our area to help solve our problems. I am sure a great many more areas similar to my own would like to have the same thing. But at the same time, I realize that a major increase in the Interstate system would tie up revenues of the Federal Trust Fund for many years to come and would intensify the need for improvement of the primary and secondary systems.

With this as a backdrop, and speaking in terms of what I believe the average legislator around our country feels, I propose that the Congress authorize a federal-aid highway program following the completion of the Interstate along the following lines:

1. Following completion of the Interstate system, continue the present Federal Highway Trust Fund and revenues going into it for improvement of the primary and secondary federal-aid highways of the various states.