

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY ALAN S. BOYD

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY STANDARDS

I have asked you here today to make available to you, and discuss with you, our uniform standards for implementing the National Highway Safety Act of 1966.

The standards are the product of an intensive process which began when Congress, at the President's urging, passed this important legislation last September. That process has included the development by the National Highway Safety Bureau of the draft standards issued in February; the careful assessment of these drafts by States, communities, and organizations participating in the Nation's safety movement, and the advice and recommendations of the National Highway Safety Advisory Committee.

These standards represent the end result of that process. They also represent an early practical step in the national effort to reduce death and destruction from America's highways. They are the opening strategy in an applied effort by the States and the Federal Government to significantly raise our level of driving safety.

When Congress passed the Act, no one could speculate as to the ultimate cost of a full-scale national highway safety program. To provide for this when practicable, the Act requires that we submit to the Congress, by January 10, 1968, a detailed estimate of the cost of carrying out the program, with recommendations for Federal, State, and local funding participation. Although we cannot predict the levels to be estimated in January, there is no doubt that they will substantially exceed the amount we are spending at present to begin the program.

Our authorized funds for implementing the program through June 30, 1968, total \$167 million. After setting aside five percent administrative costs, we have apportioned 75 percent of the Federal-aid authorizations for State and community highway safety programs, on the population basis required by the Act. The Act leaves to the discretion of the Secretary the formula for apportionment of the remaining 25 percent, and we are now developing that formula.

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Within each State, Federal-aid funds will be allocated on the basis of programs whose implementation or improvement is aimed at achieving the performance goals raised by our standards. Further, as directed by the law, at least 40 percent of the funds to a State will be earmarked for improvement of community-level highway safety programs.

To qualify for Federal funds, a State must demonstrate to us that it is in the process of implementing or improving programs aimed at achieving the goals of our standards. Also, it must show that its current expenditures for such programs, including those of political subdivisions, will equal or exceed the average level of such expenditures for the two full fiscal years which preceded enactment of the National Highway Safety Act.

Finally, I want to stress this:

Every step which we have taken or will take to implement this Act is intended to stimulate and assist the States toward meeting a goal which everyone in this country endorses -- the goal of safer highways. Some States are further along than others toward achieving that goal. But every State can do more than it is presently doing to speed the day when its roads and streets can claim a level of safety equal to other components of the national transportation system.

We intend to work closely and cooperatively with each State in carrying out the Act. The goals implicit in these standards are a matter of national necessity, and can only be achieved if the parties work in concert. I have every reason to believe that the States are in full accord with this approach to the national highway safety program.

There will be questions as the program gets underway, not only from States but from public officials, localities and individual citizens. Recently the Federal Highway Administration conducted a series of preliminary discussions with State representatives concerning the administration of the program. With the standards now having been issued, I have asked the Federal Highway Administrator, Mr. Bridwell, and his staff, to undertake an intensive effort, in cooperation with the States to inform the Nation of the scope, importance, and application of this program and the new standards.

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