



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
January 7, 1987

FHWA 01-87
Contact: Eric L. Bolton
Telephone: (202) 366-0660

DOT REPORT SUPPORTS CONTINUATION OF RELAXED HOV RESTRICTIONS ON I-395

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole today told Congress that a currently ongoing demonstration project on Northern Virginia's I-395 should be made permanent, with only a minor modification to the evening commute time. The demonstration project relaxed the 24-hour, four-or-more passenger carpool requirement in the express lanes of I-395 to only the morning and evening rush hours.

The report recommends that the carpool restrictions apply from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the morning and from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the evening. At all other times, the express lanes will be open to general traffic.

In summarizing the operational and environmental consequences of the congressionally-mandated demonstration project, the report explained that the relaxed High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) restrictions, in effect since April 1, 1985, has had little or no negative impact on the area's air quality, energy consumption and traffic flow. Indeed, the report concluded that "the demonstration (project's) goal of creating higher utilization of the express lanes through a change in the restricted hours has been reasonably met..."

The report did recommend extending the HOV-4 requirement for the evening rush hour by one-half hour, to 6:30 p.m. Under the demonstration project, the evening rush period extended from 3:30 p.m. to only 6:00 p.m.

"The 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. time is a prime commute time and availability of high quality service on the lanes is important to provide incentives which may help reverse the decline in carpooling in the corridor," the report explained.

In forwarding the report to Congress, Dole noted, "Upon formal expiration of the demonstration (project), control for determining the exact hours of restriction of the I-395/I-95 facility will again become the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation and the District of Columbia Department of Public Works and Transportation."

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY
February 17, 1987

FHWA 02-87
CONTACT: Cecilio A. Leonin
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Eric L. Bolton
(202) 366-0660

FHWA REPORTS DECREASE IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR FOURTH QUARTER OF 1986

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart today announced that highway construction costs decreased 5.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 1986, bringing the composite index for highway construction costs for the entire year down by 0.3 percent from the previous year.

The fourth-quarter 1986 results lower the Federal Highway Administration's composite index to 167.0 percent of the 1977 base index (1977 average costs equal 100 percent). The annual index for the entire calendar year 1986 is 171.6, a decrease of 0.3 percent from the 172.1 annual index recorded for 1985.

Significant decreases in the unit prices of common excavation, bituminous concrete surfacing and structural steel resulted in the overall reduction in the index for the fourth quarter. There were increases in the unit prices for Portland cement concrete pavement and reinforcing steel. Unit prices for structural concrete were essentially unchanged.

The three-quarter moving composite price index for the third quarter of 1986 -- obtained by combining data for the last three quarters of 1986 -- decreased 1.9 percent from the previous three-quarter average.

Trends in highway construction costs are measured by an index of average contract prices compiled from reports of state highway contract awards for Federal-aid contracts (other than those for the Secondary System) greater than \$500,000.

- more -

The composite price indices during the past 2 years and the percentage changes from the preceding quarter have been as follows:

(Three-quarter moving index)

	Quarterly Price Index	Percentage Change	Three-quarter Moving Index	Percentage Change
*4rd quarter, 1984	166.0	--	162.3	--
1st quarter, 1985	168.1	+1.3	168.8	+4.0
2nd quarter, 1985	173.9	+3.5	172.3	+2.1
3rd Quarter, 1985	175.3	+0.8	173.5	+0.7
4th Quarter, 1985	171.5	-2.2	174.5	+0.6
1st Quarter, 1986	175.7	+2.5	172.3	-1.3
2nd Quarter, 1986	169.0	-3.8	173.3	+0.6
3rd Quarter, 1986	176.0	+4.1	170.1	-1.9
4th Quarter, 1986	167.0	-5.1	--	--

* For the three-quarter moving index, these are the middle quarters of the three-quarter periods.

* * * * *

The price levels of the component items of the quarterly index in the fourth quarter of 1985, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Price Index 1977=100			Percentage Change this quarter from:	
	Fourth Quarter 1986	Third Quarter 1986	Fourth Quarter 1985	Third Quarter 1986	Fourth Quarter 1985
Excavation.....	185.3	212.9	194.7	-13.0	- 4.8
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete...	172.9	159.8	144.7	+ 8.2	+19.5
Bituminous concrete.....	158.4	177.2	189.1	-10.6	-16.2
Composite surfacing.....	163.0	171.7	174.9	- 5.1	- 6.8
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel.....	165.0	160.7	159.6	+ 2.7	+ 3.4
Structural steel.....	162.3	164.4	145.5	- 1.3	+11.5
Structural concrete.....	159.6	160.2	165.0	- 0.4	- 3.3
Composite structures....	161.4	161.7	157.4	- 0.2	+ 2.5
Composite price index.....	167.0	176.0	171.5	- 5.1	- 2.6

- more -

The price levels of the current component items of the three-quarter moving index in the third quarter of 1985, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Three Quarter Moving Price Index 1977=100			Percentage Change this quarter from:	
	Third Quarter 1986	Second Quarter 1986	Third Quarter 1985	Second Quarter 1986	Third Quarter 1985
Excavation.....	196.6	199.9	194.3	-1.7	+1.2
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete....	156.9	154.0	145.9	+1.9	+7.5
Bituminous concrete.....	167.4	174.6	185.1	-4.1	-9.6
Composite surfacing.....	164.1	168.0	172.6	-2.3	-4.9
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel.....	162.8	161.7	159.4	+0.7	+2.1
Structural steel.....	162.2	163.9	155.8	-1.0	+4.1
Structural concrete.....	162.4	166.3	171.9	-2.3	-5.5
Composite structures.....	162.4	164.7	164.3	-1.4	-1.2
Composite price index.....	170.1	173.3	173.5	-1.8	-2.0

* * * * *

The U.S. Average contract unit prices for the index items during the various periods shown are:

	Unit	Individual Quarters		Three Quarters	
		3rd Qtr. 1986	4th Qtr. 1986	2nd Qtr. 1986*	3rd Qtr. 1986**
Excavation....	CuYd.	2.48	2.16	2.33	2.29
PCC surface...	Sq.Yd.	15.91	17.21	15.32	15.62
Bit.conc.surf.	Ton	27.42	24.50	27.01	25.90
Str. reinf....	Lb.	0.437	0.449	0.440	0.443
Str. steel	Lb.	0.855	0.844	0.852	0.843
Str. concrete	Cu.Yd.	229.89	229.03	238.71	233.02

* Weighted average unit prices for the first quarters of 1986.

**Weighted average unit prices for the last quarters of 1986.

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U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, March 6, 1987

FHWA 03-87
Contact: James A. Griffin
Eric L. Bolton
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

DOT PROPOSES TO UPGRADE TRUCK AND BUS EQUIPMENT STANDARDS AND TO REQUIRE MORE STRINGENT INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole has announced that the Department proposes to upgrade truck and bus equipment standards and to tighten inspection procedures for the nation's trucks and buses.

"We believe that these revisions to our existing equipment and inspection regulations will more accurately reflect the changes in vehicular technology which have occurred in the truck and bus industries in recent years," Secretary Dole said. "I strongly believe that these proposed revisions will help ensure that all Americans enjoy the safest possible highway environment."

The proposals, published in the February 26, 1987 Federal Register, would modify two parts of the Highway Administration's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

The first proposed modification would upgrade existing standards or introduce new ones for equipment on interstate trucks and buses, including parts such as axles and their attachments, frame and frame assemblies, lights, brake and steering systems, suspension systems, wheels and rims, fuel tanks, fuel systems (including natural gas fuel systems) and other vehicle parts and accessories. This revision also would simplify and clarify existing parts of this section of the regulations.

The second proposed modification would expand existing Federal motor carrier inspection requirements to include a mandatory inspection of the vehicle at least once a year. Under the FHWA proposal, most motor carrier companies would be authorized to conduct their own inspection, provided the companies meet federal inspection requirements.

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-2-

Comments are due by April 27, 1987.

For further information, contact Mr. Neill L. Thomas, Office of Motor Carrier Standards, (202) 366-2999 or Mrs. Kathleen S. Markman, Office of the Chief Counsel, (202) 366-0834, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
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400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

M-493

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY
March 20, 1987

FHWA 04-87
Contact: James A. Griffin
Eric L. Bolton
Tele: (202) 366-0660

FHWA APPOINTS CHIEF OF NEW OFFICE OF MOTOR CARRIER INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart has announced the appointment of John F. Grimm to the position of director of the agency's newly created Office of Motor Carrier Information Management and Analysis.

"With more than two decades of service in the motor carrier industry, John Grimm brings extensive, real-world experience to his new post," Barnhart said. "I am pleased to welcome him aboard."

The Office of Motor Carrier Information Management and Analysis is responsible for collecting data relating to the operations and practices of the motor carrier industry throughout the nation. In addition, the office will coordinate the establishment of a computerized, national clearinghouse of information on commercial drivers' licenses and driver traffic records which will enable states to ensure that only one commercial driver's license will be issued to individuals who have satisfactory driving records. The clearinghouse will be operational by January 1, 1989. The new office will be located within FHWA's Office of Motor Carriers.

Grimm began his trucking career in 1964 with O'Boyle Tank Lines, Inc., of Rockville, Maryland. His experience includes serving as dispatcher, terminal manager, traffic manager, vice president of sales and traffic, executive vice president, and president. When O'Boyle Tank Lines merged with Quality Carriers, Inc., a for-hire tank truck carrier located in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, Grimm became chairman of the board of directors.

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Grimm served as president of the National Tank Truck Carriers between 1983 and 1984, and also was a member of the executive committee and the policy and finance committee of the American Trucking Associations from 1984 to 1987. In addition, he was appointed a member of the Department of Transportation's National Hazardous Materials Transportation Advisory Committee in 1985.

Grimm served in the Marines between 1961 and 1964, leaving active duty with the rank of first lieutenant.

Grimm is a native of Washington, D.C. An attorney, he graduated from New York's Fordham University in 1961 and George Washington University's Law Center in 1970. He is married to the former Ellen Farrell. They have three children.

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U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY
March 22, 1988

FHWA: 05-88
Contact: Eric L. Bolton
Laurel Faulkner
Tel.: (202)366-0660

NINE STATES TAKE TOP HONORS IN NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY COMPETITION

Federal Highway Administrator-designate Robert E. Farris today announced that nine states have won a total of 10 awards for outstanding highway safety programs for 1987.

"Highway safety has always been a primary concern of the Federal Highway Administration," Administrator-designate Farris said. "But highway safety has never been more important than it is today, particularly as an increasing number of our highways undergo repairs while having to accommodate greater volumes of traffic.

"State and local safety programs are saving thousands of lives each year, and preventing countless thousands of injuries," Farris said. "It is fitting that these state safety initiatives receive national recognition."

The New York City Department of Transportation took "Best Overall" honors in the competition for its "Queens Boulevard Pedestrian Safety Program." The safety effort involved improving traffic control devices, enforcement, and safety education to reduce the number of pedestrian deaths along the city's widest arterial street. During the year before the program was instituted, there were 21 pedestrian deaths and 19 severe injuries over a 2.5 mile section of Queens Boulevard. Pedestrian accidents dropped by more than 50 percent as a result of the program.

Other winners in the 1987 safety awards competition are:

- California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS), which claimed two awards, one for "Innovation" involving the installation of new, indented rumble strips on more than 150 miles of desert freeway shoulders to warn motorists they are running off the road; and the second award (an "Honorable Mention") for a statewide work zone safety campaign, called "Give 'Em A Brake," to raise public awareness about the hazards of driving on roads under repairs.

- Tennessee Department of Transportation, the "Effectiveness Award" for constructing a detour on a reconstruction project on I-24. The detour was so carefully planned and constructed that there were fewer accidents on the detour than on the original road.
- Minnesota Department of Transportation, the "Efficiency Award" for providing cost-effective training for 3,100 employees involved in work zone areas, and establishing uniform standards for local traffic control.
- Nevada Department of Transportation, the "Program, Planning, Development and Evaluation Award" for implementing a data system to report traffic and accident information on a computer-generated map.
- New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, which also won the "Program, Planning, Development and Evaluation Award" for developing and implementing a data system to report traffic and accident information on a computer-generated map.
- Washington Department of Transportation, the "Safety Improvement Award" for a program to upgrade substandard bridge railings using a "three-beam" rail system, costing considerably less than the Jersey barrier rails used before, thus allowing more bridges to be upgraded in safety.
- South Carolina Office of Highway Safety Programs, the "Local Agency Safety Award" for developing a local traffic records system providing access to accident data maintained by the state.
- Colorado Department of Highways, an "Honorable Mention" for inventing a "truckers trivia" game on safe operation and maintenance practices. Game cards are provided at truck stops and points of entry into the state.

A national panel of highway safety experts selected the 1987 award winners. Panel members were David Hensing, Deputy Executive Director of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, Thomas Brahm, Executive Director of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, Judith Stone, Director of Federal Affairs, National Safety Council, Sheldon Strickland, Chief Traffic Engineering Division, Office of Traffic Operations, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and R. Clarke Bennett, Director of the Office of Highway Safety, FHWA.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE MONDAY
March 30, 1987

FHWA 05-87
Contact: James A. Griffin
Eric L. Bolton
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

FHWA TO SET ALCOHOL INTOXICATION STANDARD FOR TRUCK AND BUS DRIVERS

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole today announced that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has initiated a comprehensive rulemaking to establish a federal alcohol intoxication standard for commercial motor vehicle operators. Once established, the standard will apply to commercial truck and bus drivers in both interstate and intrastate commerce.

"While most commercial drivers shun the use of alcohol and drugs while operating their vehicles on the nation's highways, the FHWA, in cooperation with state and local governments and the motor carrier industry, is determined to rid our highways of those few irresponsible drivers who choose to operate their vehicles while under the influence of intoxicants," Secretary Dole said.

The Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 directed the FHWA to contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) for a study that would review the effects of reducing the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) standard from 0.10 percent to 0.04 percent (or some level in between). FHWA contracted with the NAS in January 1987 to undertake the study.

The Act also states that failure to adopt regulations by October 27, 1988, would automatically result in the adoption of a 0.04 BAC standard.

Secretary Dole said that the first step in this process is to identify the specific level of alcohol concentration in the blood at which point a driver should not be allowed to operate a commercial motor vehicle. Toward this end, the Secretary noted that an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was published in the March 23, 1987 Federal Register, asking all interested parties to present their views regarding what concentration of alcohol in the blood should serve as the federal standard.

Secretary Dole noted that comments to the FHWA docket would be made available to the National Academy of Sciences, whose panel of experts is reviewing existing literature on the BAC-driver issue, as well as comments from the public.

The Secretary explained that federal regulations already prohibit a blood alcohol concentration of 0.04 percent or more for airplane pilots and train operators. She added, "There is no present federal standard for truck and bus drivers, although most states have set a standard of 0.10 percent blood alcohol concentration for these vehicle operators." The Secretary said that no state has set a standard as low as 0.04 percent for truck and bus drivers.

"In our current Federal Register notice, we are asking interested parties to give their views on what the federal BAC standard for commercial motor vehicle operators should be, including whether the standard should reflect the most common state level of 0.10 or the more stringent 0.04 standard, or some level in between."

Written comments should be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration, Office of Motor Carrier Standards, Room 3404, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Comments must be received by May 22, 1987.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
April 9, 1987

FHWA: 06-87
Contact: James A. Griffin
Eric L. Bolton
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

SEVEN STATES TAKE TOP HONORS IN NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY COMPETITION

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole and Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart today announced that seven states have received a total of 10 awards in a new, national highway safety competition established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in recognition of outstanding state and local highway safety efforts.

"Transportation safety has always been the top priority of my administration, and highway safety is one of my greatest concerns because it affects so many millions of people each day," Secretary Dole said. "In order to expand our highway safety efforts to the fullest, all levels of government must work together. These new awards serve to recognize outstanding state and local safety programs, and underscore the spirit of cooperation that characterizes the relationships that have been forged at all levels of government."

The California Office of Traffic Safety took "best overall honors" for providing teams of experts to assist local municipalities in developing and improving local highway safety programs. The teams have worked with more than 100 cities and towns throughout California.

The California Department of Transportation also shared a second national award with the California Highway Patrol for reducing truck accidents in a highway construction zone on a heavily-traveled section of Interstate 80 near Truckee, Cal. By slowing truck speed and improving overall traffic flow through the construction zone, the number of accidents involving trucks was cut to zero during working hours.

"State safety initiatives, such as these award winners, prevent serious injuries and save thousands of lives every year," Administrator Barnhart said. "I am pleased to have established this awards competition as a fitting recognition for the outstanding efforts of state and local safety officials."

A total of 10 projects or programs in seven states received national recognition for improving highway safety, including three honorable mentions. A total of 64 entries from 26 states competed in the 1986 Highway Safety Awards contest.

Other winners in this year's safety awards competition include:

- 0 New York State Department of Transportation: two awards, one for a program to remove roadside utility poles at high-accident sites; and one for a computerized program to evaluate the effectiveness of certain kinds of highway safety improvements.
- 0 Colorado Department of Highways: two awards, one for developing a short video tape which is displayed at a truck weigh station at the top of a long, steep downgrade on I-70, west of Denver. The video depicts the dangers truck drivers face descending the hill and describes the location and techniques for using an escape ramp should a truck's brakes fail on the hill. The second award, an honorable mention, was for safety improvements in the Idaho Springs Tunnel on I-70, including a more effective, interior lighting system.
- 0 Minnesota Department of Transportation: one award, for a state-wide program involving the installation and upgrading of traffic warning and regulatory signs in 84 out of 85 state counties.
- 0 Washington State Department of Transportation: one award, for performing operational and safety reviews of completed highway construction projects which have resulted in numerous changes in design and construction practices.
- 0 Ohio Department of Transportation: an honorable mention award, for the development of a program to identify and improve hazardous highway locations anywhere in the state.
- 0 Finally, Oregon Department of Transportation: an honorable mention award, for the development of a descending-grade truck escape ramp on Interstate 5 near Ashland to safely stop run-away trucks.

A panel of nationally-recognized highway safety experts selected the 1986 winners. Panel members included: Ms. Judith Stone, executive director of the National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives; Mr. David Hensing, deputy executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO); Mr. Thomas Brahms, executive director of the Institute of Transportation Engineers; Mr. Dennis Judycki, director of FHWA's Office of Traffic Operations. Mr. R. Clarke Bennett, director of FHWA's Office of Highway Safety, served as chairman of the selection panel.

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U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
May 6, 1987

FHWA 07-87

CONTACT: Cecilio A. Leonin
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Eric L. Bolton
(202) 366-0660

FHWA REPORTS INCREASE IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR FIRST QUARTER OF 1987

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart today announced that highway construction costs in the first quarter of 1987 increased 1.7 percent when compared to the fourth quarter of 1986.

Increases in the unit prices of structural steel, structural concrete and common excavation triggered the rise in the index. There were decreases in the unit prices for Portland cement concrete and reinforcing steel. The unit price for bituminous concrete was essentially unchanged.

The first quarter results raise the Federal Highway Administration's composite index for highway construction costs to 169.9 percent of the 1977 base index (1977 average costs equal 100 percent). The annual index for the entire calendar year 1986 is 171.6, a decrease of 0.3 percent from the 172.1 annual index recorded for 1985.

The three-quarter moving composite price index for the fourth quarter of 1986 -- obtained by combining data for the two quarters of 1986 -- with the first quarter of 1987 - increased 0.3 percent from the previous three-quarter average.

Trends in highway construction costs are measured by an index of average contract prices compiled from reports of State highway contract awards for Federal-aid contracts (other than those for the Secondary System) greater than \$500,000.

- more -

The composite price indices during the past 2 years and the percentage changes from the preceding quarter have been as follows:

(Three-quarter moving index)

	Quarterly Price Index	Percentage Change	Three-quarter Moving Index	Percentage Change
*1st quarter, 1985	168.1	--	168.8	+4.0
2nd quarter, 1985	173.9	+3.5	172.3	+2.1
3rd quarter, 1985	175.3	+0.8	173.5	+0.7
4th quarter, 1985	171.5	-2.2	174.5	+0.6
1st Quarter, 1986	175.7	+2.4	172.3	-1.3
2nd Quarter, 1986	169.0	-3.8	173.3	+0.6
3rd Quarter, 1986	176.0	+4.1	170.1	-1.8
4th Quarter, 1986	167.0	-5.1	170.6	+0.3
1st Quarter, 1987	169.9	+1.7	--	--

* For the three-quarter moving index, these are the middle quarters of the three-quarter periods.

The price levels of the component items of the quarterly index in the first quarter of 1987, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Price Index 1977=100		Percentage Change this quarter from:		
	First Quarter 1987	Fourth Quarter 1986	First Quarter 1986	Fourth Quarter 1986	First Quarter 1986
Excavation.....	202.2	185.3	194.7	+ 9.1	+ 3.9
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete...	144.8	172.9	157.2	-16.3	- 7.9
Bituminous concrete.....	159.3	158.4	181.7	+ 0.6	-12.3
Composite surfacing...	154.7	163.0	173.9	- 5.1	-11.0
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel.....	159.5	165.0	161.7	- 3.3	- 1.4
Structural steel.....	168.5	162.3	167.3	+ 3.8	+ 0.7
Structural concrete.....	168.3	159.6	170.6	+ 5.5	- 1.3
Composite structures....	166.9	161.4	168.0	+ 3.4	- 0.7
Composite price index.....	169.9	167.0	175.7	+ 1.7	- 3.3

The price levels of the current component items of the three-quarter moving index in the fourth quarter of 1986, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Three Quarter Moving Price Index 1977=100			Percentage Change this quarter from:	
	Fourth Quarter 1986	Third Quarter 1986	Fourth Quarter 1985	Third Quarter 1986	Fourth Quarter 1985
Excavation.....	198.3	196.6	193.8	+0.9	+ 2.3
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete....	156.2	156.9	149.5	+1.5	+ 6.5
Bituminous concrete.....	166.1	167.4	186.1	-0.8	-10.7
Composite surfacing.....	163.9	164.1	174.4	-0.1	- 6.0
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel.....	161.9	162.8	159.3	-0.6	+1.6
Structural steel.....	164.3	162.2	159.1	+1.3	+3.3
Structural concrete.....	161.9	162.4	171.4	-0.3	-5.5
Composite structures.....	162.7	162.4	165.2	+0.2	-1.5
Composite price index.....	170.6	170.1	174.5	+0.3	-2.2

* * * * *

The U.S. Average contract unit prices for the index items during the various periods shown are:

	Unit	Individual Quarters		Three Quarters	
		4th Qtr. 1986	1st Qtr. 1987	3rd Qtr. 1986*	4th Qtr. 1986**
Excavation....	CuYd.	\$ 2.16	\$ 2.35	\$ 2.29	\$ 2.31
PCC surface...	Sq.Yd.	17.21	14.41	15.62	15.84
Bit.conc.surf.	Ton	24.50	24.64	25.90	25.70
Str. reinf....	Lb.	0.449	0.434	0.443	0.440
Str. steel	Lb.	0.844	0.876	0.843	0.855
Str. concrete	Cu.Yd.	229.03	241.50	233.02	232.34

* Weighted average unit prices for the three quarters of 1986.

**Weighted average unit prices for the last two quarters of 1986 and the first quarter of 1987.

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U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
Monday, June 1, 1987

FHWA 08-87
Contact: Eric Bolton
Damian Hill
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DOT ORDERS TRUCK AND BUS DRIVERS TO CARRY SINGLE LICENSES ONLY

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole today announced the issuance of a Federal regulation that, effective July 1, 1987, will make it illegal for truck and bus drivers in the United States to have more than one commercial driver's license.

The regulation, published in the June 1 Federal Register, applies to all operators of large trucks weighing more than 26,000 pounds, to drivers of vehicles designed to carry at least 15 passengers, and to drivers of vehicles that transport placarded hazardous materials.

"It is unconscionable that a truck or bus driver today can obtain several drivers licenses from different states, then hide bad driving records by distributing traffic violations among them," Secretary Dole said. The ban on possessing more than one commercial driver's license will apply not only to those drivers who operate in interstate commerce, but also to those who operate wholly within a state's borders.

The new single-license requirement was contained in the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986, and will be administered by the Federal Highway Administration. The landmark highway safety bill includes other significant provisions which will become effective at various times during the next five years. Nationwide uniform standards for testing drivers will be developed; licenses will be issued according to the class of vehicles (heavy trucks, buses, etc.) to be driven; and a central clearinghouse will be established which will contain the complete driving records of commercial drivers.

The regulation also implements the mandatory penalties for serious traffic violations and felony convictions which are specified in the law. Enforcement will be carried out by FHWA until such time that individual states adopt their own enforcement statutes or regulations. Drivers will be disqualified from operating commercial vehicles for a minimum of one year for driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, for leaving the scene of an accident, or for using their vehicle in the commission of a felony. A first-time conviction of one of those offenses for a driver transporting hazardous materials would bring a minimum of three years disqualification. A second offense would result in a disqualification for life.

- more -

A commercial vehicle operator who has been found to have used a commercial vehicle in the commission of a felony involving the manufacture, distribution, or dispensing of a controlled substance or possession with the intent to distribute will also be disqualified for life.

Two serious traffic violations within a period of three years will subject the commercial driver to a minimum 60-day disqualification from driving; three such violations will bring a 120-day disqualification. In addition to the disqualifications, drivers may be fined up to \$2500 for each offense, and employers a similar amount if they "knowingly" allow their drivers to operate with multiple licenses.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
June 17, 1987

FHWA 09-87
Contact: Eric L. Bolton
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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR ASKS FOR CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON DIESEL TAX EVASION

Estimating that the nation's Highway Trust Fund is being shortchanged hundreds of millions of dollars each year by evaders who pocket federal diesel fuel taxes instead of remitting them to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart has urged Congress to schedule hearings on diesel tax evasion. Fuel taxes are the principal source of federal assistance to state highway and bridge building programs.

In a letter to Congressman Jake Pickle (D-TX), chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Ways and Means Committee, Barnhart said that while the diesel fuel tax will produce some \$2.7 billion this year, recent investigations show that the yield should be far greater. The difference is mainly due to large scale evasion, and the loss is felt by all the states which rely on these tax proceeds for federal-aid highway construction.

Recently the IRS and the National Association of Tax Administrators (NATA) joined in a study to examine the extent of the evasion, and methods for ending it. Praising their effort, Barnhart said, "It is gratifying that state and federal government employees are not only willing to initiate reviews of their own programs and policies, but are anxious to correct the deficiencies they find. Oftentimes, however, they cannot correct those deficiencies unless laws which control their actions are changed. Contrary to what the public often believes, civil servants are probably more outraged at program abuses than others who don't have to cope with the problems on a daily basis."

Barnhart said the IRS/NATA study confirms several things long suspected: the federal diesel tax collection law is confusing and ineffective; the tax dollars lost are significant; and the problem is widespread.

-more-

Many states have increased their diesel fuel tax receipts by collecting the tax from fuel distributors rather than the retailers. In this way, auditors can focus on relatively few taxpayers rather than having to spread their efforts over hundreds or thousands of retail outlets. Federal law now requires the IRS to collect taxes on more than 18 billion gallons of diesel fuel from the more than 60,000 retailers nationwide. Many other outlets are legally taxable, but escape the tax entirely by never having filed a return and remaining unknown to the IRS. The available resources of the IRS to audit these taxpayers, and to discover non-filers are simply not equal to the task. The FHWA believes that this loss of essential revenue to the Highway Trust Fund will continue until the Congress changes the underlying law to follow the states' example.

Administrator Barnhart has requested the Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Ways and Means Committee to consider moving the point at which the diesel tax is levied from the fuel pump to the distributors. "If this is done, the number of companies which the IRS would be required to audit would be reduced from more than 60,000 to approximately 8,000. States which have moved the point of collection in that manner have experienced remarkable increases in tax collections," Barnhart said.

One state increased its reported taxable sales by 32 percent in two years, another state by 20 percent in one year. The 20 percent increase in reported sales resulted in a 100 percent increase in its tax revenue. One state investigation exposed a retailer which had sold 20 million gallons of diesel fuel but had remitted no federal taxes to the IRS.

Billions of gallons of diesel fuel are used annually. The federal tax has risen to 15¢ per gallon. Huge amounts of dollars are involved, and with the risk of detection being very small, evasion of payment of those taxes has proven irresistible to some. Instead of merely increasing taxes, the Federal Highway Administration believes the Congress should enact legislation to close loopholes and improve tax collection procedures so that all existing taxes are collected.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
June 17, 1987

FHWA 10-87
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Tel.: (202) 366-0660

DOT REPORTS IMPROVED HIGHWAY CONDITIONS DESPITE RECORD-BREAKING TRAVEL

In her second "state of the nation's highways" report to Congress, Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole reported that the overall condition of the nation's highways improved significantly during 1984 and 1985, in spite of a 7.6 percent increase in travel during the same period.

Secretary Dole attributed the improvement in road conditions to additional highway revenues generated by the 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act and to a shifting of funds by the states from new construction to resurfacing and rehabilitation projects.

"States have made pavement reconstruction and resurfacing a priority since passage of the 1982 Act," Secretary Dole said. "As a result, the overall condition of pavement on major highways has improved, reversing a pattern established between 1980 and 1982, when highway surfacing was wearing out faster than it was being replaced."

The report, entitled "The Status of the Nation's Highways: Conditions and Performance," is the ninth in a series of biennial studies which track changes in the overall condition of various categories of highways. It also measures the present level of traffic volume and predicts future trends; details long-range highway requirements necessary to meet projected increases in highway use; and describes the highway finance picture at all levels of government, including revenues, disbursements, and capital investments.

Since the 1982 Act was passed, Secretary Dole noted that highway receipts at all levels of government increased dramatically, totaling a record \$63.9 billion in 1986. "This is the highest level of receipts ever recorded," Dole said. State highway receipts during the period increased from \$22 billion to \$33.4 billion, while federal receipts jumped from \$10.1 billion to \$14.8 billion. The remainder, some \$15.7 billion, came from local governments.

"Today, new funding is enabling states to respond to highway capacity needs long postponed in the 1970s for lack of money," Secretary Dole said. "However, states are also recognizing the importance of system preservation. In effect, we are seeing an almost even split in the percentage of capital funds allocated to system expansion and system preservation."

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart echoed the Secretary's optimism about the report's findings.

"Total spending for highways has increased significantly since 1982," Barnhart said. "The largest annual increase was in 1985 when disbursements rose 13.3 percent over the previous year. Outlays for capital improvements also rose by \$4 billion in 1985, representing 47 percent of total disbursements."

Barnhart pointed out that the report demonstrates a shift between urban and rural highway disbursements. Funding for urban areas has increased 10% since the early 1980s, paralleling a 10.1 percent rise in urban travel, he said, adding that some of the increase in urban vehicle miles is due to the annexation of heavily-traveled rural highway sections, a trend which also explains a decrease in rural mileage since 1983.

Other findings contained in the report include:

- o The cost to maintain 1983 overall highway conditions on non-local roads through the year 2000 will approximate \$315 billion, or \$19.7 billion per year.

- o In fiscal year 1986, the states obligated a total of \$2.7 billion in federal funds to improve 11,383 bridges previously classified as structurally deficient. Overall, the estimated cost of bringing all deficient bridges up to current standards is \$51.4 billion.

- o Travel has increased in every area of the country since the last biennial report to Congress, reaching 1.77 trillion vehicle miles in 1985, up 7.6 percent from the previous high of 1.64 trillion vehicle miles recorded in 1983.

- o The cost to complete the Interstate highway system is estimated at \$19.3 billion as of December 1985.

- o Currently, motor fuel taxes and other user fees account for 60 percent of all highway revenues and fully 81 percent of federal highway dollars. This marks an increase since 1984 when taxes and user fees accounted for only 76.8 percent of federal highway receipts.

- o Fatality rates decreased on every type of highway between 1977 and 1985. Fatalities per 100 million vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT) were 0.94 on urban interstates; 1.40 on rural interstates; 2.16 on other urban arterials; 3.52 on other rural arterials; 1.87 on urban collector roads; and 3.98 on rural collector roads.

o Future travel demand is anticipated to increase an average 2.85 percent annually through the year 2000, reaching 2.70 trillion miles by the turn of the century.

o Congestion has worsened since 1983, with the percent of peak hour travel on urban interstates under congested conditions increasing from 54 percent to almost 61 percent.

Copies of the report may be obtained by writing the Federal Highway Administration, Office of Policy Development, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, July 15, 1988

FHWA 13-88
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FHWA SETS STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES

A final rule establishing standards for the testing and licensing of interstate and intrastate truck and bus drivers was announced today by Secretary of Transportation Jim Burnley.

The Department has almost completed its review of waiver requests from the commercial driver license requirements from groups including farmers, firefighters, transit workers, active duty military personnel, certain railroad employees and employees of public utilities. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) received over 2,000 comments on the question of whether, if granted, the waivers would serve the public interest or diminish public safety. The FHWA will announce its decision in a separate action next week on these specific waiver requests.

"The rule being issued today will help ensure that the individuals operating commercial motor vehicles on our highways meet the high level of competency that is demanded of their job," Secretary Burnley said.

"We have been working with the states to determine the most effective means of testing and licensing commercial drivers. This final rule establishes the minimum standards which the states must follow in developing their testing and licensing procedures," Federal Highway Administrator Robert E. Farris said.

Under the Federal Highway Administration's rule, all Commercial Driver License (CDL) applicants must take a basic knowledge test which will be relatively uniform among the states. The test will have no fewer than 30 questions and applicants must have a passing grade of 80 percent. Applicants must also demonstrate their driving skills by passing a driving test in a vehicle representative of the type they intend to operate.

Each individual state has the discretion to "grandfather" selected operators who have already demonstrated their ability to safely operate those vehicles. To be "grandfathered", a driver must have a good driving record and proof of passing an acceptable skills test or two years of driving experience.

Today's action is one in a series of rulemakings designed to implement the various provisions of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986, which sought to improve the safe operation of commercial motor vehicles and to reduce truck and bus accidents on the nation's highways.

The final rule also specifies that:

- * Drivers who intend to operate double/triple trailers, passenger vehicles designed to transport 16 or more persons, tank vehicles or vehicles transporting hazardous materials must pass specialized tests.
- * States may also allow local governments, industries or other groups to conduct the driving tests.
- * States must check applicants' driving records to ensure they are not subject to any disqualification, suspension, revocation or cancellation and to determine that they do not possess more than one license.
- * Licensing fees and length of validation for commercial licenses will be determined by the individual states.
- * States identifying drivers falsifying information shall at a minimum suspend, revoke, or cancel the CDL. The duration of the penalty will be decided by the state.
- * Any state not complying with the CDL regulations by 1993 could lose 5 percent of its federal-aid highway funds for fiscal year 1994 and 10 percent for any following years.

The regulation, which will be published in the Federal Register, applies to all operators of trucks weighing more than 26,000 pounds, to drivers of vehicles designed to transport 16 or more persons, and to drivers of vehicles that transport placarded hazardous materials.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
August 5, 1987

FHWA 13-87
Contact: Eric Bolton
Damian Hill
Phone: (202) 366-0660

TOP ENGINEERING STUDENTS UNDERTAKE FHWA HIGHWAY RESEARCH PROJECTS

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart has announced that 13 top engineering students from colleges and universities across the country are currently involved in a wide range of highway research projects at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

"The students, both graduate and undergraduate, are participating in FHWA's highway research efforts during 1987 under the agency's 'Grants for Research Fellowships' program," Barnhart said. He added that when the projects have been completed, the students will not only have gained invaluable experience, but they will also receive academic credit for their work from their respective institutions.

"Under FHWA's research grant program, engineering students, as well as students from other academic disciplines, can actively participate in real-world research efforts as part of their educational curricula," Barnhart said. "Not only does the student benefit from such a program, but so too does the university and the FHWA, as well as the American motorist and commercial users of our highways."

The 1987 grant awards involve research into such diverse areas as highway design and engineering, bridge design and construction, highway safety, commercial vehicle safety, materials testing and evaluation, and other highway-related transportation disciplines.

The student research program is offered annually to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students. Funds for this year's Fellowships program will total \$215,000.

Barnhart said that during 1987, the students are conducting their projects at FHWA's Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center in McLean, Virginia.



U.S. Department of
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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
August 5, 1987

FHWA 14-87
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FHWA REPORTS ROAD CONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR SECOND QUARTER OF 1987

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart today announced that highway construction costs increased 1.9 percent in the second quarter of 1987 when compared to the first quarter of 1987.

The second quarter results raised the Federal Highway Administration's composite index for highway construction costs to 172.8 percent of the 1977 base index (1977 average costs equal 100 percent). The annual index for the entire calendar year 1986 is 171.6, a decrease of 0.3 percent from the 172.1 annual index recorded for 1985.

The rise in the second quarter index was caused by significant increases in the unit prices for excavation, reinforcing steel and structural steel, which were not offset by decreases in the unit prices for bituminous concrete and structural concrete. The unit price for Portland cement concrete was essentially unchanged.

The three-quarter moving composite price index for the first quarter of 1987--obtained by combining data for the last quarter of 1986 with the first two quarters of 1987--decreased 1.2 percent from the previous three-quarter average.

Trends in highway construction costs are measured by an index of average contract prices compiled from reports of State highway contract awards for Federal-aid contracts (other than those for the Secondary System) greater than \$500,000.

- more -

The composite price indices during the past 2 years and the percentage changes from the preceding quarter have been as follows:

(Three-quarter moving index)

	Quarterly Price Index	Percentage Change	Three-quarter Moving Index	Percentage Change
*2nd quarter, 1985	173.9	--	172.3	--
3rd quarter, 1985	175.3	+0.8	173.5	+0.7
4th quarter, 1985	171.5	+2.2	174.5	+0.6
1st Quarter, 1986	175.7	+2.4	173.5	-1.3
2nd Quarter, 1986	169.0	+3.8	172.3	+0.6
3rd Quarter, 1986	176.0	+4.1	170.1	-1.8
4th Quarter, 1986	167.0	-5.1	170.6	+0.3
1st Quarter, 1987	169.9	+1.2	168.5	-1.2
2nd Quarter, 1987	172.8	+1.9	--	--

* For the three-quarter moving index, these are the middle quarters of the three-quarter periods.

* * * * *

The price levels of the component items of the quarterly index in the second quarter of 1987, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Price Index 1977=100			Percentage Change this quarter (second Quarter 1987) from:	
	Second Quarter 1987	First Quarter 1987	Second Quarter 1986	First Quarter 1987	Second Quarter 1986
Excavation	224.9	202.2	196.1	+11.2	+14.7
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete	144.9	144.8	143.7	+ 0.1	+ 0.8
Bituminous concrete	151.9	159.3	166.0	- 4.6	- 8.5
Composite surfacing	149.7	154.7	158.8	- 3.2	- 5.7
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel	169.2	159.5	162.7	+ 6.1	+ 4.0
Structural steel	178.9	168.5	160.3	+ 6.2	+11.6
Structural concrete	157.3	168.3	167.5	- 6.5	- 6.1
Composite structures	166.7	166.9	164.3	- 0.1	+ 1.5
Composite price index	172.8	169.9	169.0	+ 1.7	+ 2.2

- more -

The price levels of the current component items of the three-quarter moving index in the first quarter of 1987, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Three Quarter Moving Price Index 1977=100			Percentage Change this quarter (First Quarter 1987) from:	
	First Quarter 1987	Fourth Quarter 1986	First Quarter 1985	Fourth Quarter 1986	First Quarter 1986
Excavation	201.3	198.3	195.1	+1.5	+3.2
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete	151.1	159.2	149.5	-5.1	+1.1
Bituminous concrete	155.6	166.1	178.5	-6.3	-12.8
Composite surfacing	154.3	163.9	169.2	-5.9	- 8.8
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel	164.8	161.9	161.4	-1.8	+2.1
Structural steel	168.5	164.3	158.8	+2.6	+6.1
Structural concrete	161.1	161.9	168.0	-0.5	-4.1
Composite structures	164.3	162.7	163.8	+1.0	+0.3
Composite price index	168.5	170.6	172.3	-1.2	-2.2

* * * * *

The U.S. Average contract unit prices for the index items during the various periods shown are:

	Unit	Individual Quarters		Three Quarters	
		1st Qtr. 1987	2nd Qtr. 1987	4th Qtr. 1986*	3rd Qtr. 1987**
Excavation	CuYd.	\$ 2.35	\$ 2.62	\$ 2.31	\$ 2.34
PCC surface	Sq.Yd.	14.41	14.42	15.84	15.08
Bit.conc.surf.	Ton	24.64	23.50	25.70	24.07
Str. reinf....	Lb.	0.434	0.460	0.440	0.448
Str. steel	Lb.	0.876	0.930	0.855	0.876
Str. concrete	Cu.Yd.	241.50	225.80	232.34	231.23

* Weighted average unit prices for the last two quarters of 1986 and the first quarter of 1987.

**Weighted average unit prices for the last quarters of 1986 and the first two quarters of 1987.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY
September 16, 1987

FHWA 15-87
CONTACT: Eric L. Bolton
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(202) 366-0660

FHWA/UMTA TO STREAMLINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES IN HIGHWAY AND MASS TRANSIT CONSTRUCTION

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart and Urban Mass Transportation Deputy Administrator Alfred A. DelliBovi today announced new changes to federal environmental regulations which will streamline environmental requirements and related legal procedures as they apply to highway and mass transit projects around the nation.

"Under the new rule, the federal government will be able to eliminate some of the red-tape and time-consuming legal processes that often added years to the construction time of much-needed transportation projects," Barnhart and DelliBovi said.

Emphasizing that legitimate environmental concerns will continue to be adequately protected under the new amendments, they added, "The new rule provides for more decentralization of federal decision-making authority by granting additional leeway to field offices of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) in deciding whether local highway and/or mass transit projects require comprehensive environment assessments.

-more-

"This change in federal environmental regulation allows local FHWA or UMTA field offices to exclude certain projects from stringent environmental documentation requirements, provided that there is little possibility of an adverse environmental impact from the construction of such a project," Barnhart said. "Clearly, minor improvements to an existing road may not have the same environmental impacts as would the construction of an entirely new highway," Barnhart explained. "Under the new environmental rule, transportation projects like our road improvement example may not have to undergo the same rigorous environmental examination as the new construction project. The new rule allows local federal officials to exclude any project from the previously required rigorous environmental examination if it is obvious that the project will not result in significant environmental impacts."

DelliBovi added, "These rules are the result of extensive evaluation by UMTA and FHWA. They also reflect our commitment to provide guidance from the national level which is flexible enough to meet important local needs."

The new regulation contains many other changes which clarify and simplify existing environmental procedures, some of which are:

- o A change in the requirements for preparing a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Under the old regulation, changes in the design or construction of a highway or mass transit project could require the preparation of a supplemental EIS, even if additional significant environmental impacts were not anticipated. Under the new rule, such changes would not necessarily be grounds for requiring a supplemental EIS, unless a determination is made that the changes would cause additional significant environmental impacts not foreseen or evaluated in the original EIS documentation.

- o A change which makes clear that federal environmental laws should not prevent work on an existing historic transportation facility, such as an old railroad station, provided the work does not affect the historic quality of the facility.

The new environmental regulations were printed in the August 28, 1987 issue of the Federal Register. For specific information on the final regulation as it applies to FHWA, contact Mr. Frederick Skaer at (202)366-2050. For information on UMTA's aspects of the regulation contact Mr. Joe Ossi at (202)366-0096.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
November 5, 1987

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FHWA REPORTS ROAD CONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR THIRD QUARTER OF 1987

Federal Highway Administrator Ray A. Barnhart today announced that highway construction costs decreased 0.5 percent in the third quarter of 1987.

The third quarter results decreased the Federal Highway Administration's composite index for highway construction costs to 171.9 percent of the 1977 base index (1977 average costs equal 100 percent).

Decreases in the unit prices of common excavation, portland cement concrete, reinforcing steel and structural steel caused the decrease in the composite index. The unit prices for bituminous concrete and structural concrete increased from the previous quarter.

The three-quarter moving composite price index for the second quarter of 1987--obtained by combining data for the first three quarters of 1987 -- increased 2.0 percent from the previous three-quarter average.

Trends in highway construction costs are measured by an index of average contract prices compiled from reports of state highway contract awards for Federal-aid contracts greater than \$500,000 (other than those for the secondary system).

- more -

The composite price indices during the past 2 years and the percentage changes from the preceding quarter have been as follows:

(Three-quarter moving index)

	Quarterly Price Index	Percentage Change	Three-quarter Moving Index	Percentage Change
*3rd quarter, 1985	175.3	--	173.5	--
4th quarter, 1985	171.5	-2.2	174.5	+0.6
1st Quarter, 1986	175.7	+2.4	172.3	-1.3
2nd Quarter, 1986	169.0	-3.8	173.3	+0.6
3rd Quarter, 1986	176.0	+4.1	170.1	-1.8
4th Quarter, 1986	167.0	-5.1	170.6	+0.3
1st Quarter, 1987	169.9	+1.7	168.5	-1.2
2nd Quarter, 1987	172.8	+1.7	171.8	+2.0
3rd Quarter, 1987	171.9	-0.5	--	--

* For the three-quarter moving index, these are the middle quarters of the three-quarter periods.

The price levels of the component items of the quarterly index in the third quarter of 1987, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Price Index 1977=100			Percentage Change this quarter (Third Quarter 1987) from:	
	Third Quarter 1987	Second Quarter 1987	Third Quarter 1986	Second Quarter 1987	Third Quarter 1986
Excavation	201.2	224.9	212.9	-10.5	-5.5
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete	143.6	144.9	159.8	-0.9	-10.1
Bituminous concrete	167.8	151.9	177.2	+10.5	-5.3
Composite surfacing	160.1	149.7	171.7	+6.9	-6.8
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel	160.6	169.2	160.7	-5.1	-0.1
Structural steel	160.7	178.9	164.4	-10.2	-2.3
Structural concrete	174.7	157.3	160.2	+11.1	+9.1
Composite structures	167.5	166.7	161.7	+0.5	+3.6
Composite price index	171.9	172.8	176.0	-0.5	-2.3

- more -

The price levels of the current component items of the three-quarter moving index in the second quarter of 1987, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Price Index 1977=100			Percentage Change this quarter (Second Quarter 1987) from:	
	Second Quarter 1987	First Quarter 1987	Second Quarter 1986	First Quarter 1987	Second Quarter 1986
	Excavation	208.1	201.3	199.9	+3.4
Surfacing:					
Portland cement concrete	144.4	151.5	154.0	-4.7	- 6.2
Bituminous concrete	160.1	155.6	174.6	+2.9	- 8.3
Composite surfacing	155.1	154.3	168.0	+0.5	- 7.7
Structures:					
Reinforcing steel	162.6	164.8	161.7	-1.3	+ 0.6
Structural steel	170.2	168.5	163.9	+1.0	+ 3.8
Structural concrete	168.0	161.1	166.3	+4.3	+ 1.0
Composite structures	167.9	164.3	164.7	+2.2	+ 1.9
Composite price index	171.8	168.5	173.3	+2.0	- 0.9

* * * * *

The U.S. average contract unit prices for the index items during the various periods shown are:

	Unit	Individual Quarters		Three Quarters	
		2nd Qtr. 1987	3rd Qtr. 1987	1st Qtr. 1987*	2nd Qtr. 1987**
Excavation	CuYd.	\$ 2.62	\$ 2.34	\$ 2.34	\$ 2.42
PCC surface	Sq.Yd.	14.42	14.29	15.08	14.38
Bit.conc.surf.	Ton	23.50	25.96	24.07	24.77
Reinf. steel	Lb.	0.460	0.437	0.448	0.442
Str. steel	Lb.	0.930	0.835	0.876	0.885
Str. concrete	Cu.Yd.	225.80	250.73	231.23	241.06

* Weighted average unit prices for the last quarter of 1986 and the first two quarters of 1987.

**Weighted average unit prices for the first three quarters of 1987.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, December 8, 1987

FHWA 17-87
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FHWA PROPOSES UNIFORM TESTING STANDARDS FOR TRUCK AND BUS DRIVERS

Secretary of Transportation Jim Burnley today announced that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is proposing to establish minimum testing and licensing standards to be implemented by all 50 states and the District of Columbia when licensing interstate and intrastate commercial truck and bus drivers. All truck and bus drivers must be licensed under the proposed new standards by April 1, 1992.

"The uniform standards we are proposing today would mean that each state licensing authority will test applicants for a commercial vehicle license to ensure they are fully competent to operate their vehicles safely and thoroughly understand federal motor carrier safety regulations," Burnley said.

The proposed standards, required by the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986, will be published in the Federal Register on Dec. 11, 1987. Interested parties should submit comments by Feb. 9, 1988. The FHWA plans to issue final standards early next summer.

"We are anxious to complete this important rulemaking to assure that all five and a half million commercial drivers can be licensed under these standards by 1992," the Secretary stated. "We are working closely with the states to develop testing procedures, so states will be able to license drivers under the new standards soon after they become effective."

The FHWA requests comments on three approaches for states to show that they are testing and licensing drivers to conform with the law. Under Alternative 1, the FHWA would establish general performance standards for the states. Each state would develop a plan for a testing and licensing program that demonstrates that it is complying with the federal law. Each state would submit its plan to FHWA for approval.

Under Alternative 2, the FHWA proposes more detailed standards for states to follow when testing and licensing drivers. Alternative 2 provides specific guidelines on the content of the test and the method of testing. Under Alternative 3, the FHWA would allow each state to choose one of the two principal alternatives for implementing its program.

"We are open to effective ways to implement the Commercial Driver's License Program," Burnley noted. "Ultimately we want to ensure that each commercial vehicle driver is a skilled, knowledgeable individual who drives safely and has only one license," he added.

"I want to urge all state licensing authorities to cooperate with one another to make this program as effective as possible. The traveling public has a right to expect commercial drivers on our nation's roads to be familiar with necessary safety regulations," the Secretary said.

All the alternatives focus on the need for commercial vehicle drivers to pass a "knowledge" (written) test, as well as a "driving skills" test, before the state could issue a commercial vehicle license. If, for example, a person wants to operate a tank truck hauling gasoline, that person would have to demonstrate that he or she is fully competent to operate that vehicle and is thoroughly familiar with hazardous materials regulations and safety procedures.

The alternatives also require that the driver demonstrate the necessary skills and ability to operate a truck or bus safely, based on the type of vehicle to be operated: combination vehicles, buses, heavy straight trucks, and small vehicles. Special, additional knowledge tests would be required for persons wanting to operate five types of specialized equipment -- vehicles carrying hazardous materials, cargo tanks, double or triple trailers, non-combination vehicles with air brakes, and articulated buses. Additional driving skills tests would be required for operators of cargo tanks and non-combination vehicles with air brakes.

The rulemaking would also require that commercial licenses be tamperproof, and would require that certain information be included on the licenses so that they would be uniform throughout the country.

The proposed licensing rules also require that states cross-check through the Commercial Driver's License Information System and the National Driver Register to confirm that an applicant does not have an additional driver's license from another state. "The single license, single record concept, is an essential element of our program, and states must make every effort to ensure the integrity of the new commercial driver's licenses," Burnley said.

The Secretary noted that four public forums have been scheduled to receive public comments. The public forums will be held as indicated:

January 19,	Washington, D.C.
January 21,	Atlanta, Ga.
January 26,	St. Louis, Mo.
January 28,	Los Angeles, Calif.

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Persons who want to make oral presentations at the forums should contact Stanley Hamilton at FHWA's Office of Motor Carriers, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Room 3403, Washington, D.C. 20590, by phone at (202) 366-0665 at least 10 days prior to the forum.

Persons wishing to submit written statements to the docket may do so by sending their statements (preferably in triplicate) no later than Feb.9, 1988, to Docket No. MC-87-18, Federal Highway Administration, Room 4205, HCC-10, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

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