

DOT's 1980 Bumper Plan 'Already Being Met'

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has revealed that many 1974 and 1975 model cars already meet the Department of Transportation's very low-speed no-damage barrier crash test that won't take effect until the 1980 model year at the earliest.

The Institute also has shown that even more cars are already meeting the property protection barrier crash standard that DOT wants to require of 1977 model cars at the earliest – a standard that would permit damage to bumpers and associated hardware in 5 mile per hour barrier impacts.

The Institute's research findings were presented by IIHS Senior Vice President Albert Benjamin Kelley in testimony at Senate Commerce Committee oversight hearings on DOT's implementation of the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act of 1972 – the law that mandates a property damage bumper standard.

Kelley called DOT's property damage proposal a "technological anachronism."

Kelley pointed to IIHS barrier tests in which 1974 and 1975 domestic and imported model cars met DOT's "off-in-the-future," 5 mile per hour property damage bumper standard. Although meeting the proposed requirements of the standard that is supposed to minimize property damage in low-speed crashes, ten of the tests produced damage estimated to range from \$4.00 to \$142.66.

Eight of the IIHS tests resulted in no damage at all, satisfying barrier test requirements that DOT has proposed for 1980 model cars. Kelley observed that "The state of auto design art is, and has been for

Inside

- Auto Makers React To Proposed Bumper Standard . . . Page 3
- NHTSA Ignores Own School Bus Research . . . Page 4
- NHTSA To Air Passive Restraint Data . . . Page 6
- Massive Air Bag Test Plan Suggested . . . Page 7
- 'Passive' Requirement Urged For All Safety Standards . . . Page 8
- 'Millions' Of Defective Cars Remain on Highway . . . Page 9
- Coleman New Transportation Secretary . . . Page 11
- 1974 Status Report Index Available . . . Page 12

some time, easily able to meet the 5 mile per hour barrier impact test requirements of the newly-proposed, off-in-the-future standard. Moreover, some of the makers who already are meeting the proposed standard are doing so with lightweight bumper systems.”

NO PROPERTY PROTECTION RULE YET

“Nearly two and one half years after enactment of the Title I Congressional mandate for adoption of a property damage bumper standard, no such requirement has yet been adopted. Only a bumper standard to discourage safety related damage, adopted four years ago under the 1966 act, is in effect,” Kelley noted.

Instead of implementing the provisions of the 1972 Cost Savings Act, DOT “has staved off compliance with this law by issuing proposed standard after proposed standard, each weaker than the last,” Kelley charged. “The once-planned effective date of Sept. 1, 1974, for a property damage bumper standard has long since passed,” he noted.

“Round after round of ever-weaker proposals is not the answer. The public, confronted with the spiraling costs of repairing humans and their cars after crashes, requires those standards even more urgently now than when the laws were passed. It is time to get on with the job,” Kelley said.

DOT’s parade of property damage bumper proposals “portray a pattern of erosion in the agency’s commitment to an at least minimally effective standard,” Kelley said. He summarized the erosion that has occurred in the 18 months since Aug. 3, 1973, when DOT first proposed a property damage bumper standard:

WEAKER AND WEAKER

- “The August 3, 1973 proposal would have required that front and rear bumpers of all cars manufactured on or after September 1, 1974, be able to withstand 5 mile per hour front and rear barrier impacts and, a year later, 5 mile per hour front and rear pendulum impacts and 3 mile per hour corner pendulum impacts, with no safety damage or other material damage of any kind, *including to bumpers*.”

“In the 1973 proposal, the agency explained that material damage in low-speed crashes, in which it *specifically included bumper damage*, ‘is far from immaterial to the car owner,’ who must ‘face the choice of repair, which is likely to be expensive, or nonrepair, which diminishes the resale value of the car.’

- “The latest, March 12 proposal, is in sharp contrast. It would not take effect until the 1977 model year, at the earliest, and possibly not until the 1978 or 1979 model year. Until the 1980 model year it would *permit* damage to ‘the bumper face bar and the components and associated fasteners that directly attach the bumper face bar to the chassis frame’ — parts whose replacement costs in the current model year routinely exceed \$300, and in some cases exceed \$500, per car. Then, starting no earlier than the 1980 models, it would permit damage to the bumper face bar, described as ‘no permanent deviation greater than three-eighths of an inch from its original contour.’

“The latest proposal grew out of DOT’s plan, announced January 2, 1975, to vitiate both the existing *safety* bumper standard and the proposed Title I *property-damage* bumper standard, by setting their barrier impact test requirement at 2.5 miles per hour rather than 5 miles per hour.” DOT’s 2.5 mile per hour proposal was withdrawn March 12. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 10, No. 6, March 14, 1975.)

Kelley characterized DOT’s most recent property damage proposal as a “technological anachronism” that “if given the respectability of adoption as a federal regulation . . . would provide

virtually a government license for the design of costly, needless damage and repair into bumper systems that technically comply to the letter with federal laws and rules governing vehicle safety and damageability.”

OPPORTUNITIES MISSED

DOT “is failing to seize opportunities” offered by both the 1966 and 1972 laws “to develop vehicle performance standards that would substantially reduce, at savings to consumers rather than at additional cost, needless waste of human life and health, property and precious natural resources,” Kelley said.

In bumpers as well as other areas, DOT’s recent record has been one of “advancing backwards . . . perpetuating what is worst and most wasteful in automobile design,” ignoring “important opportunities to encourage change that is good for the country – opportunities to develop and implement federal performance standards that discourage rather than condone auto design decisions contrary to public interest,” Kelley said.

Among these “unheeded” opportunities is a safety performance standard that DOT could issue under the 1966 act, “that cars be designed and manufactured to travel at speeds no greater than required by public transportation needs and public health consideration,” Kelley said.

“Clearly, very substantial reductions in weight and fuel consumption, and perhaps more importantly, major additional safety benefits, could be obtained by producing automobiles without such excessive performance and high speed capabilities. There has been no proposal from DOT since the ‘recent developments in the nation’s economic picture’ to reduce weight and fuel consumption by setting limits on the maximum speed capabilities of cars; instead, DOT proposes to allow manufacturers to produce vehicles allowed to sustain excessive amounts of damage in walking speed crashes,” Kelley said recalling IHS testimony at DOT’s February 18 hearing.

It could also improve requirements aimed at preventing bumper override-underride to “hasten the demise of expensively edged bumper faces – the kind that concentrate, rather than spread, damaging force when they hit pedestrians, cyclists or other cars.”

Copies of Kelley’s testimony are available by writing to “Oversight,” Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate Six Hundred, Washington, D.C. 20037.

Auto Makers React To Proposed Bumper Standard

General Motors, Ford and Chrysler have told the Senate Commerce Committee that they continue to favor a roll back of the federal government’s current bumper safety standard. However, Ford said that it has “no quarrel with the appropriateness” of the proposed 5 mile per hour safety standard and would probably give its “general support” to the proposal.

In testimonies that were to have been given before the Committee’s March 20 session, representatives of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler all repeated earlier arguments, made before a Department of Transportation hearing last month, calling for a roll back of the requirement that bumpers withstand impact at a top speed of 5 miles per hour. All three auto makers would prefer that NHTSA implement an earlier proposal that would cut back the maximum speed of impact to 2.5 miles per hour.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration had considered and rejected the auto makers’ proposals to legalize weaker bumpers, deciding instead to retain the current 5 mile per hour requirement to

protect safety related items with a proposed modification in the number of pendulum impacts required in testing. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 10, No. 6, March 14, 1975.)

Chrysler, accused of excess weight and costliness in its current bumper designs, conceded that the company could "do better given more time" and "will do so" if NHTSA's current bumper proposal, calling for fewer pendulum impacts, is adopted.

General Motors continued to insist that the new safety bumper proposal is an example of "over-regulation."

NHTSA Ignores Own School Bus Research

Three school bus safety standards recently proposed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ignore that agency's own research and fail to heed prior warnings from school bus manufacturers and others about a serious loophole in one proposal.

The agency's proposals:

- Contain a loophole that could allow school buses that are structurally *weaker* than current buses;
- Call for a rollover test similar to a bus industry standard already in effect for more than 10 years, a test that is weaker than a roof crush test recommended by an NHTSA funded study;
- Ignore NHTSA research that cited a need for release devices easily usable by children.

In releasing its new proposals, NHTSA took no action on its long delayed proposal to strengthen school bus seats. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 9, No. 18, Oct. 11, 1974.)

The proposals are in response to the congressional mandate of the Motor Vehicle and School Bus Safety Amendments of 1974. Those amendments to the 1966 National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act directed NHTSA to issue school bus safety standards covering, among other things, occupant protection and crashworthiness of body, frame and fuel systems. They gave NHTSA until Jan. 1, 1976, to issue school bus safety standards. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 9, No. 19, Oct. 29, 1974.)

BUS BODY STRENGTH

In January, 1974, NHTSA first proposed a rule aimed at strengthening points where sheet metal is joined. The agency noted that several National Transportation Safety Board investigations since 1967 "pointed to the failure of sparsely riveted bodies as a factor contributing to deaths and injuries in school bus accidents. The NTSB studies suggest that failure of the bus joints contributes to disintegration of the bus body and occupant ejection, and that the edges of the opened joints cause lacerative injuries." In one report, NTSB said that sparsely riveted sheet metal that separated in a crash exposed "children to sharp metal contact" similar "to the edge of a shovel, or a cookie cutter." (See *Status Report*, Vol. 5, No. 15, Sept. 1, 1970.)

In response to NHTSA's original proposal, Ward School Bus Mfg., Inc. told the agency that the proposed joint strength standard was already being met by existing bus bodies. Other bus manufacturers and the Public Interest Research Group faulted NHTSA for failing to set minimum strength performance requirements for school bus sheet metal. A manufacturer could meet the joint strength requirements by "lowering the strength and the thickness" of the bus sheet metal, thus reducing the "overall strength of the

bus body," Sheller-Globe Corp. a bus body manufacturer, told NHTSA. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 9, No. 9, May 1, 1974.)

NHTSA's own May, 1973, report on school bus safety, *Pupil Transportation Safety Program Plan* (DOT report HS 820 267) warned, "Unless the basic structural strength of the load carrying members is adequate for the crash conditions imposed, joint efficiency is superfluous."

NHTSA's current proposal, which has a proposed effective date of March 1, 1976, still does not specify minimum strength requirements for bus sheet metal.

ROLLOVER PROTECTION

NHTSA's current roof crush proposal is based on a test originally developed by the School Bus Manufacturers Institute (SBMI) in 1964. As does the current version of the SBMI test, NHTSA's proposal would require that a school bus roof not cave in more than five and one-eighth inches when the equivalent of the bus's loaded weight is statically applied to the roof. An SBMI official told *Status Report* that bus manufacturers claim they meet the SBMI test. However, NHTSA has proposed an effective date of April 1, 1976, for the proposed standard.

In issuing the proposal, NHTSA ignored a recent study entitled, *School Bus Safety Improvement Program* (NHTSA contract 046-3-694), done for the agency by Ultrasystems, Inc. The NHTSA-funded study recommended that a school bus's roof not cave in more than two inches when statically loaded to one and one-half times the bus's fully loaded weight.

NHTSA also ignored its own internal reports on school bus rollover protection. In analyzing a school bus rollover crash that killed nine children in Monarch Pass, Colo., NHTSA's May, 1973 report, *Pupil Transportation Safety Program Plan*, stated that "the school bus which experienced a complete roof failure in the Monarch Pass tragedy, in all probability . . . could support its own weight when overturned."

NHTSA's own March, 1972, crash investigation report on the Monarch Pass rollover (NHTSA report 600-779) concluded that a static rollover test is "not considered to be indicative of rollover crash performance of the bus body." The agency report recommended that tests that "more accurately simulate expected dynamic loading conditions be devised." (See *Status Report*, Vol. 7, No. 10, May 22, 1972.)

EMERGENCY EXITS

NHTSA's current proposals included an amendment to the bus window retention and release standard (FMVSS 217) to set performance requirements for emergency doors on school buses. Under the agency's proposal, school buses would have either one rear emergency door or two side emergency doors, one on each side.

Each door would have to open outward by a release mechanism that would work from inside and outside the bus. However, under the proposed standard, the release mechanism could be located more than four feet from the bus floor.

If a manufacturer chose to use two side exits, it might pose a serious escape problem if, after a crash, the bus lands on its side, completely blocking one exit. To escape through the other exit, a child would have to span an eight foot gap from one side of the bus to the other and push open the exit door enough to squeeze out.

The NHTSA proposal does not require the use of roof escape hatches, nor does it propose specifications for them even as options. A December, 1970, NHTSA-sponsored study by University of Oklahoma

Research Institute (OURI), entitled *Escape Worthiness of Vehicles and Occupant Survival* (NHTSA contract FH-11-7307), reported, based on a series of school bus escape tests, that “use of rear exit doors and *roof hatches* in buses significantly reduces escape times.” (Emphasis added.)

In a July, 1972, follow-up report for NHTSA (NHTSA contract FH-11-7512), OURI stated that “advantages of roof escape hatches for school buses appear to be amply demonstrable to warrant their requirement.”

In addition, the agency proposed that the release mechanism inside the bus work “with an upward vertical force of not more than 40 pounds, which a child passenger should be able to perform.” The July, 1972 study by OURI reported that only a few of the many six and seven year old children tested could exert a 40 pound pull on an emergency door release handle.

OURI stressed that the “design of emergency exit operating handles or levers should not exceed the strength capabilities of children for the type of force application used. It is suggested that an increase in selective busing of children in the elementary grades will make this design requirement an increasingly important part of escape exit design, since the entire passenger load will often be small children.”

The proposed effective date for NHTSA’s emergency exit requirements is April 1, 1976.

BRAKES

In announcing its recent proposal to indefinitely delay the upgraded hydraulic brake standard (FMVSS 105-75), for buses and other heavy vehicles, NHTSA said it “intends shortly to propose” a separate hydraulic brake standard for school buses. Currently, there is *no* federal standard for school buses with hydraulic brakes.

Inadequate school bus brakes have caused a number of fatal crashes, including ones in Decatur and Huntsville, Ala. in which a total of five children were killed, and the Monarch Pass, Colo. crash in which nine children died.

Comments on NHTSA’s proposals on joint strength (Docket 73-34, Notice 2, due by April 14, 1975), emergency exits (Docket 75-3, Notice 1, due by April 29, 1975), and rollover protection (Docket 75-2, Notice 1, due by April 29, 1975), should be sent to: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Docket Section, Room 5108, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

NHTSA To Air Passive Restraint Data

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has scheduled a public meeting to discuss its proposed passive restraint requirements (FMVSS 208).

The meeting, scheduled for May 19 and possibly extending through May 21, will cover “the status of passive restraint technology, vehicle manufacturer experience with passive restraints in their vehicle models, and the expected environmental and economic impact of mandatory passive restraint requirements,” the agency said in its March 26 *Federal Register* notice.

In the notice, NHTSA also raised a series of specific questions concerning passive restraints that it hopes will be discussed by participants at the meeting:

- The status of passive restraint technology;
- Plans by vehicle manufacturers for passive restraint system selection;
- Minimum lead times for installation;
- Passive restraint test experience;
- Weight implications and environmental impact;
- Costs versus benefits and overall economic impact.

Testifying before the Senate Commerce Committee oversight hearing on March 14, NHTSA Administrator James Gregory was unable to estimate how long after the May hearing he would issue the final version of the proposed standard.

Sen. Vance Hartke (D-Ind.), chairman at that Senate hearing, berated Gregory for NHTSA's delays over the standard in the past. He told Gregory to report to the Committee monthly on NHTSA's progress in rulemaking until the agency issues an "ultimate" proposal.

The public meeting on passive restraints will take place at the U.S. Department of Commerce Auditorium, 14th St. and Constitution Ave., N.W. from 9 to 5 p.m.

Persons wishing to make a formal presentation should contact Robert Nelson, NHTSA, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590 (telephone 202/426-2802) before April 30, 1975.

Massive Air Bag Test Plan Suggested

The President's Council on Wage and Price Stability has put a plan before the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration calling for government purchase of one-half million air bags, to be used in a large scale study of their effectiveness. The council also has asked NHTSA to delay "full-scale implementation" of its passive restraint rule.

An NHTSA official called the council's plan "intriguing" but would make no other comment.

The plan was first publicly mentioned by George Eads, the council's assistant director of government operations and research, during testimony before a Senate Commerce Committee hearing March 20. Later, Eads told *Status Report* that the air bags would be installed in a random sample of new cars, ranging from sub compact to luxury size, that would then be sold through the usual dealer channels. (Air bags are currently available only on a limited range of large luxury General Motors models. See *Status Report*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Feb. 14, 1975.) The prices of the cars for the consumer would be the same as those for cars not so equipped.

According to Eads, the plan would result in a "major test" of the air bag, with an estimated 5,000 deployments in crash situations and an unknown number of inadvertent firings during a one year period. "The idea is to get a lot of air bags out there quickly," Eads told *Status Report*. Such a study, conducted and evaluated before the proposed mandatory air bag requirement goes into effect, would thereby remove from the auto buying public as a whole the burden of experimentation, he claimed, and would result in "increased consumer confidence."

Eads mentioned the 1977 model year as a possible beginning for the experiment, to coincide with what he termed "reports of contingency plans by the auto makers" to gear for full production of air bags by that time should the passive restraint section of FMVSS 208 go into effect.

Should the testing scheme be implemented then, Eads said, it would not be until the 1979 model year at the earliest that the passive restraint standard would go into effect.

The cost of such a test was originally estimated to be \$250 million for the purchase of the air bags. However, council officials have now revised that estimate. By contracting with "no more than" two air bag manufacturers and one auto maker, they expect the unit price of the air bags to drop appreciably, Eads said.

The council has not yet presented its idea to auto makers, a council official said. He speculated, however, that "they wouldn't be in favor of it."

The idea was proposed to NHTSA Administrator James Gregory in a February 7 council memo, that also sought NHTSA's reaction to the plan. An NHTSA official told *Status Report* that a response was "in preparation."

'Passive' Requirement Urged For All Safety Standards

All future federal regulations should require that safety improvements be passive rather than active, according to an analysis recently presented to the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Albert Benjamin Kelley, senior vice president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, told the engineers, "The conclusion is inescapable; in federal motor vehicle safety regulation and manufacturer design decisions affecting human health, it is urgent that a criterion be imposed calling in *every* case for the adoption of an essentially passive approach unless it can be shown that no such approach exists."

In explaining the difference between an active and passive approach to public health, Kelley said, "The essence of the active approach is that it attempts to stop injury-threatening contacts between people and their environments by modifying the *behavior of people*. The essence of the passive approach is that it removes the threat of injury from such contacts by modifying the *behavior of the environment*."

Adjustable head restraints were cited by Kelley as an example of the ineffectiveness of active approaches to injury prevention. He said that adjustable head restraints that require active cooperation by the individual instead of passive, non-adjustable designs that work automatically in a crash represent "no major improvement over the earlier, ineffective efforts to 'train' or exhort drivers against having rear-end crashes."

Kelley listed the energy-absorbing steering column, laminated non-popout windshields, dashboard cushioning, energy-managing bumper systems, and backup braking systems as examples of effective passive approaches to vehicle safety.

Kelley said there is a pressing need for a passive federal standard limiting the speed of vehicles. "According to news accounts, the posted 55 mile per hour national speed limit is being as much breached as

observed,” said Kelley. He said that this limit reflects the national goals of reducing crash frequency, crash severity, fuel consumption, and air pollution.

“The passive approach to accomplishing this aspiration is to design and manufacture cars able to go no faster or only very little faster than the national speed limit,” he said.

Kelley pointed out that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has the authority to issue such a standard but has not done so. “It is a tragic anomaly that such a standard has not yet been even proposed, much less adopted,” said Kelley.

Copies of the paper may be obtained by writing “Passive vs. Active,” Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate Six Hundred, Washington, D.C. 20037.

‘Millions’ Of Defective Cars Remain On Highway

Millions of vehicles involved in safety related recall campaigns have never been inspected for the defects for which they were recalled, according to a report by the General Accounting Office.

The report is the result of a GAO investigation, requested by Sen. Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.), of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s defect identification activities. GAO is an investigative agency that monitors federal programs for the Congress.

GAO said the vehicles go uninspected or uncorrected because:

- “not all owners receive defect notifications,
- “some dealers apparently sell recalled vehicles without correcting the defects,
- “some owners simply do not return their vehicles for correction of a defect, and
- “dealers are not always prepared to service vehicles when owners bring their cars in for correction.”

GAO recommended that NHTSA “undertake a broad study” to determine why so many vehicles are not being inspected or corrected, “and determine the cost-effective alternatives for improving the effectiveness of recall campaigns.” It suggested that:

- dealers be required to certify that recalled vehicles are inspected and repaired prior to sale;
- NHTSA amend its periodic motor vehicle inspection standard (HSPS 1) “to include recalls as a special item of inspection.”

1,582 RECALLS SINCE 1966

“From the start of the safety program in 1966 through June 1974, domestic and foreign manufacturers conducted 1,582 recalls, involving over 45.7 million vehicles, for various safety reasons. The safety administration reports it has influenced 160 recalls for safety defects, involving about 22.7 million

Recall Data Dissemination Planned

At a recent press conference, NHTSA and the President's Office of Consumer Affairs announced a program to broaden the dissemination of vehicle and tire recall information. The two agencies will send lists of recalled vehicles and equipment to state and local consumer offices, consumer groups, newspapers, insurers and others who request the information.

The agencies said they hope that the program will improve the poor response to defect notification campaigns cited by the General Accounting Office in its recent report.

NHTSA's Office of Consumer Services, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590 is compiling a mail list for distribution of the information.

vehicles and 1.2 million equipment items," GAO said. (Most recalls are initiated by auto makers themselves.)

During that same period, NHTSA made 436 formal investigations; 34 resulted in one or more recalls of vehicles or equipment, 321 were closed because the defect was not safety-related and 81 were in progress as of June 30, 1974, GAO said.

The GAO report did not mention the life-span of those investigations. Of 73 possible defects that the agency now lists under investigation, 10 are more than four years old and six others are more than three years old. In the past, the agency has been criticized for its tardiness in completing defect investigations. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 7, No. 22, Nov. 27, 1972.)

Of the 800 to 1,500 safety related complaints that NHTSA reportedly receives every month, most are from vehicle owners. "Consumer-oriented groups, the Congress, government agencies and insurance companies are other major sources of consumer complaints," GAO said.

Responding to the GAO report, Safety Administrator James Gregory said that "NHTSA had not, heretofore, considered defects of vehicles or equipment in dealer inventory a major problem." He said that "corrective procedures, to ensure that defects in vehicles or equipment in dealer inventory are corrected, will be developed and implemented as necessary."

As for expanding NHTSA's vehicle inspection standard to include checks for unrepaired defects, Gregory said, "Based on information now available, NHTSA does not believe that periodic motor vehicle inspection would be successful in alleviating this shortcoming of the recall procedure." NHTSA thinks it would be "more feasible to verify defect correction through state vehicle registration or licensing mechanisms," Gregory said.

DEFECT INSPECTIONS

NHTSA has an experimental diagnostic program in the District of Columbia to identify uncorrected defects during routine vehicle inspection. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 7, No. 13, July 17, 1972.) An agency official told *Status Report*, that although that program "does work," it involves the "Herculean task" of tracking defects and maintaining computer lists of vehicle identification numbers (VIN's) of cars that have

been checked or repaired during recall campaigns. Gas stations, which perform vehicle inspections in most states, "are not the places to put the responsibility" for discovering uncorrected defects, he said.

NHTSA has discussed with "several large states" the feasibility of setting up programs to deny licenses or registration to vehicles that have been recalled but not checked or repaired, the official said. However, implementation of such a program — even on a pilot basis — is not seen in the near future, he indicated.

Such programs would use computer stored VIN's of cars that have been recalled but not repaired. NHTSA has compiled VIN's of cars that have been recalled since Jan. 1, 1974, but not yet repaired. It will make that list available to state officials, insurers, public interest groups and others before the end of April, another official said. Auto makers are required to supply NHTSA with those VIN's. Some auto makers have complained about the requirement. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 9, No. 12, June 18, 1974.)

Coleman New Transportation Secretary

William Coleman, recently sworn in as Secretary of Transportation, assured the Senate Commerce Committee, with slight qualifications, that he would not put the health and safety of the nation second to economic factors.

In confirmation hearings conducted by Sen. Vance Hartke (D-Ind.), chairman of the transportation subcommittee, Coleman affirmed his support of federal safety and environmental standards while at the same time reassuring Sen. Robert Griffin (R-Mich.) that he understood the current economic plight of the auto industry. He said that "some of the mandated federal improvements are important. They have to go forward," he said, though, he wanted to "re-check out the cost effectiveness of those particular programs to see whether they make sense in the present day environment."

However, benefit-cost analyses "cannot necessarily be the determining factor" in setting motor vehicle safety standards, Coleman said, since there are other factors "not always measurable in terms of dollars and cents."

Coleman said that "consumer programs and . . . concern with the environment and the energy crisis" had alerted the country "even more to the fact that we live not only for our present generation but for future generations."

In written answers to questions submitted earlier by the committee, Coleman said, "I do not think that we can talk about a 'rollback in the federal program' under any circumstances as long as we are continuing to experience over 40,000 highway fatalities each year together with hundreds of thousands of injuries." (National Health Survey data, the only scientifically sound data on the subject, indicate that highway injuries average 13,000 each day or almost 5 million per year.)

Coleman endorsed auto and highway safety standards as faster and more effective means of reducing death and injury on the highway than trying "to improve the driving habits of individuals."

Coleman said he expected the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator to use the authority under the 1972 Cost Savings Act and 1974 Motor Vehicle and School Bus Safety Amendments to gather information through the issuance of subpoenas "whenever he deems it necessary to obtain information, including manufacturer cost data," that would aid in setting motor vehicle safety standards.

1974 *Status Report* Index Available

The Institute has published an index for 1974 issues (volume nine) of *Status Report*. Single copies of the index are available by writing to "1974 Index," Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate Six Hundred, Washington, D.C. 20037.

Also available are copies of indices, published earlier, for the 1971, 1972 and 1973 issues of *Status Report*. They can be obtained by writing to the above address.

(Contents may be republished, whole or in part, with attribution.)

the highway
loss reduction

STATUS REPORT

Editor: **Ralph Hoar**

Writers in this issue: **Tim Ayers, Stephen Oesch,
Lloyd Slater, Christine Whittaker**

INSURANCE INSTITUTE for HIGHWAY SAFETY
WATERGATE SIX HUNDRED • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037
(AREA CODE 202-333-0770)