

## **Coleman: No Passive Restraint Standard**

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### **But Stresses Benefits Of Air Bag System**

Declaring that air bags in all cars would "probably save over twelve thousand lives annually and prevent or reduce in severity over one hundred thousand moderate to critical injuries per year," the outgoing U.S. Secretary of Transportation has refused to require air bags or other passive restraint systems in future new cars.

William Coleman, Jr. did this in a 66-page decision issued Monday, Dec. 6, at a highly publicized press conference. In his decision Coleman found that without qualification, passive restraints are "a reliable and effective means of substantially reducing deaths and injuries on the nation's

*(Cont'd on page 2)*

### **Seeks 'Agreement' From Auto Makers**

In his December 6 decision, Transportation Secretary William Coleman, Jr. refused to mandate passive restraint protection in future new cars. Instead, he took the following steps:

1. Invited auto company executives to meet with him, during the week of December 20, to negotiate agreements for a "large-scale demonstration program to exhibit the effectiveness of passive restraints." He expects the agreements to be "concluded by Jan. 5, 1977."

2. Said that "shortly thereafter, I will report to the President, the Congress and to the

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### ***Displeased With Decision***

Rep. John Moss (D-Cal.), chairman of the House Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: "This is a meaningless, equivocal decision. Because it proposes no new safety standard, it is essentially a non-decision. A two year test program could set back a standard requiring life-saving passive restraints five to eight years.

"This is a lame-duck decision from a lame-duck secretary. It would best have been left to the incoming administration for a resolution more in keeping with the Secretary's mandate from the Congress to take action which meets the need for motor vehicle safety."

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highways,” that new cars “can be equipped with passive restraints at a reasonable cost to the consumer . . . not more than \$100 per vehicle, in 1976 dollars,” and that neither mandatory belt use laws or “other means” are available for “increasing belt usage to gain safety benefits equal to those available through passive restraints.”

In refusing to mandate passive restraints in future new cars, Coleman went against the recommendations of the federal officials most knowledgeable about programs to reduce death and injury on the highways.

One of these, James Gregory, administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration until July 7, recommended to Coleman in April – on the basis of extensive hearings held by Gregory nearly a year earlier – that Coleman require “driver-side-only passive restraints in all new automobiles commencing Sept. 1, 1979, and full-front-seat passive restraints two years later.” This proposal subsequently was put forth by Coleman in his statement in June scheduling the August 3 hearing at which he took testimony on passive restraints. (See *Status Reports*, Vol. 11, No. 10, June 29, 1976; No. 13, Aug. 17, 1976; and No. 16, Oct. 12, 1976.)

Following Coleman’s decision, Gregory said that while he “respected Coleman for acting as he honestly felt was right, I can’t see anything that would change my recommendation – it was very carefully studied – and I would make it again if asked.”

Just three days before Coleman’s decision was published, the National Transportation Safety Board – the independent federal “watchdog” agency that investigates transportation calamities, including highway crashes – urged that Coleman require passive restraints in new cars. In a letter, Board Chairman Webster B. Todd, Jr. told Coleman:

“We believe that public acceptance will follow a decision for passive restraints. Moreover, however, an overt decision to allow high daily losses of life on the American highways to continue, when technology is available to significantly reduce those losses, would be unacceptable. We believe the primary objective to be reduction of this needless loss of life and injury . . . . Further, we recommend inclusion of the total front seat in the protective zone effective concurrent with that for the driver.”

“The potential annual lifesaving, when passive restraints are fully exploited, is not less than one-fourth of the total U.S. fatalities in transportation,” Todd said.

#### ‘PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY’

It was on his stated belief that the public is not “familiar” enough with passive restraints that Coleman hung his refusal to mandate the protective systems. “I believe,” he said, “that if the public does not have an opportunity to become familiar with the benefits of passive restraints prior to their installation in all cars, a strong negative reaction is likely.” He called this key conclusion “clearly a matter of judgment.”

Although he failed to explain why his agency has developed no program to inform the public about passive restraint systems during the seven years it has been considering a passive restraint standard, Coleman did say that the government “owes the public more exposure to the operation of air bag and passive belt systems than we usually require before issuing a federal standard.” (At the same time, in an oral statement at the Dec. 6 press conference, he seemed to be criticizing insurance industry efforts to inform the public about air bags when he said that “at least one member of this industry has been interrupting televised football games as long as I’ve been Secretary to tell us how hard it is fighting for air bags . . . .”)

In support of his "judgment" that the public would not accept passive restraint protection as required standard equipment in future new cars, Coleman in his decision referred to public opinion polls conducted by opponents of a passive restraint standard, including the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association, American Automobile Association and the Highway Safety Research Institute at the University of Michigan. He made no reference to an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study, released at the August 3 hearing, showing strong consumer support – including willingness to pay – for automatic crash protection in new cars.

#### COLEMAN'S VIEW OF HIS 'RESPONSIBILITY'

In a less publicized portion of his decision, Coleman provided another explanation for his refusal to mandate passive restraints – one based on a novel interpretation of his role under the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, which empowers the federal government to set auto safety standards.

The Act specifies that government may set auto safety *performance*, but not *design*, standards and thereby it encourages manufacturers to compete against each other with alternative safety-component designs. Coleman concluded that the Act thus "reflects a judgment by the Congress that the public interest in improving motor vehicle safety warrants some compromise" of the principles of "individual freedom of choice and the normal role of the marketplace."

(Cont'd on page 4)

#### ***Displeased With Decision*** (Cont'd from page 1)

**Representative James Scheuer (D-N.Y.), member of the House Commerce Committee,** told *The New York Times* that the decision is "sanctimonious nonsense. It is undisputed that air bags promote safety, and the decision to go ahead is not one for the public anymore than safety glass, back-up lights, direction signals or padded dashes were."

**Clarence Ditlow, director, Center for Auto Safety:** "Secretary Coleman made every one of the findings necessary to require passive restraints. His failure to do so is a violation of the mandate of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. There is every likelihood that the Center will take Coleman to court."

**Ralph Nader, consumer advocate,** told *The Washington Post* the decision was "horrendous and irresponsible . . . terrible and contradictory . . ." It "will doom thousands of Americans to needless death and injury on the highway."

**Archie R. Boe, chairman of Allstate Insurance Company:** "While we are disappointed in the decision the Secretary made today, we are gratified that his analysis, after months of study, strongly supports the position of the auto insurance industry relative to the workability, feasibility and cost in relation to air bags."

**William Haddon, Jr., M.D., president, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety:** "Secretary Coleman has refused to take an action that he himself says would stop more than 12,000 deaths a year and prevent hundreds of thousands of crippling and other injuries, at a cost of no more than \$100 per new car. Instead, he has handed the matter back to the auto industry – the very people who have withheld air bags, and honest information about air bags, from the American people for nearly a decade – by asking the auto manufacturers to voluntarily put these safety systems into a handful of cars. The outgoing secretary's decision will needlessly continue an American tragedy."

## *Auto Company Reactions*

**General Motors Corporation** is “willing to undertake discussions about this as the Secretary has proposed.” But, “in the final analysis, Secretary Coleman’s proposal is completely dependent upon the customer’s willingness to purchase cars equipped with air cushions.”

**Ford Motor Company** could not comment on “the specifics of his proposal for a field test. However, we certainly are prepared to meet with Secretary Coleman and his aides to discuss his proposal.

“There will clearly be some difficult problems to be resolved, including questions of timing, engineering, marketing and cost. The Secretary has suggested a maximum retail price of \$100 for the air bag-equipped test cars; we testified on August 3 that the customer cost, in high volume, would be about \$235.”

**Chrysler Corporation** remains “convinced that lap and shoulder belts are still the most effective way of saving lives and reducing injuries. Even so, we look forward to the results of the proposed field tests.”

It is “part of my responsibility, however, to assure that interference with freedom of choice and the role of the marketplace is minimized in the context of furthering motor vehicle safety,” Coleman said in defense of his decision not to mandate passive restraints. However, he cited no legal basis for this interpretation of Congressional intent.

Also, he attempted to make a distinction between safety standards in which “the primary purpose is self-protection” and measures “such as adequate head and tail lights, a main purpose of which is to provide protection for others.” Coleman said he believes that “more than usual consideration should be given to maximizing the individual’s freedom to choose his means of protection and to preserving the role of the private market in developing and selecting among those means of protection.” Coleman failed to note that the 1966 Act makes absolutely no distinction between safety standards for “self protection” and protection of “others.” Also, he offered no evidence that “adequate head and tail lights” offer more protection for “others” than for occupants of cars equipped with them.

In other sections of his 66-page decision, Coleman:

- found that the alleged “major potential safety hazards” that air bag critics claim to be associated with the technology are minimal or nonexistent. “Overall, information to date indicates that air bag systems have a very high degree of reliability . . . . Field experience also indicates that the air bag will deploy reliably in situations in which it is needed.”

- said that active restraint systems (such as belts that must be fastened by occupants) cannot under any foreseeable conditions reduce crash deaths and serious injuries as effectively as passive systems; “I conclude that much of the potential for reducing deaths and injuries through occupant restraint systems can be realized only through installation of passive restraints.”

- called on “the American casualty insurance industry to make firm and public commitments to offer appropriate premium reductions to the purchasers of passive restraint-equipped automobiles . . . .”
- said he “found no submission to the docket that expressed serious doubt that the technology existed or could be found by the manufacturers to put passive restraints in all cars.”

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### ***Auto Maker ‘Agreement’*** (Cont’d from page 1)

public at large the terms of these agreements, or the failure to reach them, and my recommendations for further action.”

3. Directed that “significant new steps be taken by the Department of Transportation to promote seat belt usage during the period of this demonstration program. In this regard, I am directing the administrator of NHTSA to issue, within one week of today’s decision, an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking with the goal of increasing seat belt convenience, comfort and reliability . . . . The Administrator of NHTSA will also work with state and local jurisdictions to provide information to the public about the benefits of seat belt use and to share with them the experience of countries in which mandatory belt use laws have been enacted.”

Coleman specifically “rejected the alternative of requiring states to enact mandatory seat belt use laws or otherwise achieve a specified level of belt use, primarily because I believe that the American public would not tolerate such a federal requirement at this time.”

In his “invitation” to auto makers to conduct negotiations for the demonstration project, Coleman asked “manufacturers who wish to discuss participation” to contact his office by December 17.

In the negotiations, he said, he will request “that at least two manufacturers enter into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation to manufacture and market a combined total of approximately one-half million automobiles, in various model sizes, two hundred fifty thousand cars in each of two successive years, to be equipped with passive restraints . . . at least half of these cars are to be equipped with full-front air bags and the others with driver-side-only air bags, and they are to be available for purchase beginning Sept. 1, 1978.”

The participating auto makers, he said, must agree to sell the passive restraint-equipped cars “at a price to the consumer reflecting a reasonable increment for the passive restraint system . . . . I would expect that such increment in price would not exceed \$100 for a full-front air bag system and \$50 for a driver-side-only system.”

They must also agree to market the cars on a nationwide basis, “including promoting cooperation from their dealers,” and to “assist NHTSA in monitoring the results of the demonstration program,” Coleman said.

Total cost of the demonstration program, he said, would be \$86 million — \$38 million “to be borne by the purchasers of the automobiles, leaving a net cost of \$48 million” to be borne by the participating auto companies.

Coleman failed to explain what, if any, authority or influence he possesses that would prompt any auto manufacturing company to enter into the agreements he seeks. The two domestic auto companies, GM and Ford, that have made air bag-equipped cars in very limited quantities, presently are withholding them from the marketplace and have indicated little interest in selling such cars in future, or in otherwise promoting public understanding and acquisition of air bag protection.

(Cont’d on page 6)

## BELT PROPOSAL

Following Coleman's press conference of December 6, NHTSA released a "draft" of the promised advance notice of proposed rulemaking "concerning improvement of seat belt assemblies." The draft notice, actually a discussion paper, would seek public comment on a wide range of proposed modifications intended to make existing, active safety belt systems more convenient.

However, the draft states that even if all the proposed requirements were adopted, "the agency estimates that improvements in belt usage approaching 5 percent" are the best that could be achieved. Moreover, it warns, "It is evident that some improvements in design for comfort may be made at the expense of effectiveness."

### ***Belt Use Increase 'Unlikely'***

Secretary Coleman's decision states, repeatedly and in detail, that seat belt use cannot be substantially increased above present levels.

Despite this, Coleman said in the decision that he is "not prepared to surrender the prospect of substantially increasing belt use."

Here are excerpts from Coleman's decision making it clear there is no prospect of increased belt use:

"It is highly unlikely that the Federal government could persuade many state governments to pass mandatory seat belt usage laws . . . . At present, I know of no other means of increasing belt usage to gain safety benefits equal to those available through passive restraints."

It is "politically infeasible" for the federal government to require states to adopt mandatory belt use laws. "Both the public record and our past experience with Federal efforts to encourage the enactment of belt use laws indicate that a highway safety standard mandating that each state take action to increase belt use to a specified level could not be sustained."

It "has been estimated that a highly successful program to encourage belt usage would result in no more than 35 percent lap and shoulder belt plus an additional 5 percent lap belt usage. None of the comments submitted to the docket has caused me to revise these estimates of belt usage."

"The best available information indicates that even an all out effort would be unlikely to produce voluntary seat belt use above about 40 percent."

"I believe that there are Federal and state actions which can be taken to encourage significant increases in the level of seat belt use. However, I have tentatively concluded that even with such an effort voluntary use is unlikely to rise above about 40 percent."

"I have concluded that a Federal requirement that states enact laws to increase to a specified level seat belt use would not at this time be publicly acceptable."

## Ford, GM Air Bag Costs Estimates Found 'Excessive'

Secretary of Transportation William Coleman, Jr. has found that both Ford and General Motors gave his department "excessive" and "extraneous" cost estimates for air bags.

In his December 6 decision (see above stories), Coleman also said that DOT's study of the benefits of passive restraints, such as "the savings in automobile insurance," and "medical costs," have convinced him that their availability to the public would have the effect of "stimulating car sales" rather than depressing them.

In noting the inaccuracy of air bag cost figures from GM and Ford, Coleman said that GM's estimate included the following "questionable" items:

- Amortization – GM amortized its tooling and engineering expenses over one year instead of five. This decision "alone accounted for more than half of the differences between the DOT and General Motors estimates."
- Steering Assembly – GM included "an expensive new steering column, although it has been widely demonstrated that an air bag system can meet not only current FMVSS 208 requirements, but also potentially stiffer future requirements with the current collapsible steering column."

- Profit – GM used an "excessive" dealer profit.

Coleman criticized Ford for including the following "extraneous items" in its estimate:

- Diagnostic System – Ford's system uses "an expensive diagnostic system which goes beyond the requirement of FMVSS 208 without improving the safety of the system."
- Knee Bolster – Ford included the cost of a "heavy and expensive knee bolster" even though a "much cheaper and equally effective alternative, i.e., the knee bag, is available."
- Overhead – Coleman noted that Ford's use of overhead "appeared questionable in that neither Ford nor other manufacturers have included overhead as a separate item in cost estimates of other proposed safety standards."

Differences between DOT and auto makers' cost estimates of the lifetime operating costs of an air bag system were primarily attributable to fuel consumption and maintenance costs, Coleman said. He pointed out that Ford's higher fuel consumption estimate "results primarily from the greater complexity and weight" of the system it chose to use. Ford offered "no basis" for its assumed maintenance cost. GM's operating costs are higher because the auto maker based its figures on a "heavier, more complicated system than GM contemplates for 1980," a system whose cost "should not differ greatly from the DOT estimates," Coleman said.

The cost estimate prepared by John Z. DeLorean, former GM vice president in charge of car and truck operations for North America, "was relatively consistent with the DOT estimate," Coleman noted. DeLorean's estimate has been repeatedly criticized by auto makers.

## Auto Makers Liable For Protrusion Injuries, Court Rules

A federal appeals court has upheld a \$250,000 verdict against Ford Motor Co. for injuries caused to a motorcyclist by a designed-in hazardous protrusion on a 1968 Mercury. Concluding that an auto maker has a duty "to design its products to avoid unreasonably dangerous features that may enhance injuries in a collision," the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia found that Ford failed "to thoughtfully apply commonly known design principles relating to localization of forces" in designing its cars and did not use safer, less costly, alternative designs.

In reaching its decision, the court said it was joining what it termed "the modern trend of the case law and increasingly the weight of authority" upholding auto maker liability for the injuries caused by unreasonably dangerous designs.

The case involved a March 1970 collision between a 1968 Mercury station wagon and a motorcycle ridden by George Knippen. As a result of being struck by the left front of the Mercury, Knippen "suffered very serious injuries including severe tearing away of the muscles and soft tissue in his lower left leg." Those injuries were due "in large part to contact with a sharply pointed triangular metal projection" in the Mercury's turning signal and parking light assembly, the court said.

The sharply pointed metal divider was an "excellent illustration" of an unreasonably dangerous design which is "not visible to a purchaser," but which the manufacturer "had to be aware of," the court said. In finding Ford liable, the court commented that if manufacturers' awareness of the hazard of exterior protrusions were "coupled with a consciousness of potential liability for injuries caused by the metal projection in highway accidents, it seems far more likely that they would have substituted safer, less expensive, functionally equivalent materials."

### DANGER KNOWN

The court noted that the "danger of enhanced injuries from protrusions of this same general character was well known throughout the industry in the 1960's and had been specifically brought to Ford's attention by a letter from the head" of the then National Highway Safety Bureau (now the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

The December 1967 letter from the then NHTSB Director William Haddon, Jr., M.D., referred to by the court, was sent to domestic and foreign auto makers, and concerned "injuries to pedestrians, bicyclists and others" caused by exterior protrusions and how "the contour and structure of exterior portions of vehicles often unnecessarily increase the likelihood both of injury and its severity." The letter noted that "for decades we have been aware medically and from a safety standpoint that structures which localized the forces of impact on the bodies of men, women, and children can needlessly contribute to injury, disability and death." Efforts to reduce vehicle related injuries to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users "should have just as high priority as accomplishing the same objective for drivers and passengers," the letter said. Department of Transportation rulemaking on exterior protrusion, begun in October 1967, is still dormant nine years later.

(A recent IIHS study has found that although federal safety regulations have reduced vehicle occupant deaths, pedestrian deaths have remained unaffected. See *Status Report*, Vol. 11, No. 17, Nov. 2, 1976.)

The case is *Knippen v. Ford Motor Company*, Civil Action 75-1892, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, Nov. 8, 1976.



## Roadside Hazard Results In \$4.95 Million Jury Award

A Florida jury has awarded \$4.95 million damages to a man who crashed into a boulder which had been placed in a highway median strip to stop people from driving on the grass. The man became a paraplegic as a result of injuries sustained in the crash.

Most of the damages, \$3.8 million, must be paid by the town of Tamarac, which planned the development of the highway and contracted with a housing developer for landscaping. Testimony showed that the town's consulting engineer had warned the town about the dangerous position of the boulder.

At the trial, the plaintiff's attorney argued that motorists should not be "punished" with the likelihood of serious injury if they drive on the grass. Expert witnesses testifying for the plaintiff cited research on roadside hazards that has demonstrated the needless danger of landscaping highways with objects that, if hit by a vehicle, can cause serious injury to the occupants.

The plaintiff, Tom Garchar, was hospitalized for eight months following the crash in August 1974. The jury returned a \$6 million verdict. But they found Garchar 30 percent negligent in the crash so his award was reduced to \$4.2 million. His wife was awarded \$750,000 for loss of consortium.

The developer, Leadership Housing, and Broward County, which owned the highway, settled out of court for \$1.15 million before the closing arguments in the trial. This amount was deducted from the total award and the town of Tamarac must pay the remaining \$3.8 million.

## Speed Limit Enforcement Rules Tightened

All states must now clearly state that they are enforcing the 55 mile per hour speed limit. The Federal Highway Administration has promulgated this requirement because of ambiguous certifications filed by some states under earlier — less stringent — certification procedures. States which do not enforce the speed limit face a shut-off of federal highway construction funds. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 10, No. 13, July 30, 1975.)

Although the agency had originally proposed that states provide information on the number of speeding citations given out at speeds from 56 to 65 mph, from 66 to 75 mph, and over 75 mph, the agency dropped that requirement in response to comments from the states. States opposed the requirement because of the cost of making the data processing change and because of "fears that the change would overemphasize the importance of issuing speed limit citations to the detriment of other enforcement techniques," FHWA said. The agency still retains the requirement that states must report the total number of speeding citations issued.

### **Omission**

The previous issue of *Status Report*, which reprinted a *Wall Street Journal* article on General Motor's failure to make air bags generally available, neglected to state that this article appeared in the Nov. 11, 1976 issue of that paper.

## DOT Urged To Prevent Helmet Law Repeals

The Department of Transportation should take “immediate steps” to provide state legislatures with information on “the efficacy of motorcycle helmets in reducing motorcycle deaths” according to the National Highway Safety Advisory Committee, a presidentially appointed DOT advisory group. Such data are needed to combat the continued drive to repeal helmet laws, the committee said.

Meanwhile, at its recent annual meeting, the American Association for Automotive Medicine adopted resolutions urging Congress to reinstate DOT’s authority to invoke penalties against “states that fail to enact and enforce laws requiring helmet use by all motorcyclists” and calling upon DOT “to take whatever steps are necessary to bring about compliance by every state” with the department’s helmet use standard. AAAM also urged state governors to resist efforts to repeal helmet laws and to adopt mandatory helmet use laws in those states that currently do not meet the federal highway safety standard on helmet use.

### DATA COLLECTION

The National Highway Safety Advisory Committee called on DOT to collect and analyze data on motorcycle deaths and injuries in states that have repealed their laws, as well as in comparable states that have not repealed their laws. This information “together with other evidence of the efficacy of helmets in reducing motorcycle deaths should be made available as soon as possible, especially to legislatures that are considering repeal of helmet laws,” the committee said. (Research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and others has consistently shown that motorcycle helmet use laws effectively reduce fatalities in motorcycle crashes. See *Status Report*, Vol. 10, No. 18, Nov. 5, 1975.)

The committee also urged National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s regional offices to work with governors’ highway safety representatives in states where helmet laws are threatened “in an effort to maintain existing laws.”

In 1966, only three states had such laws. A federal standard requiring such use was issued in 1967, and by 1975 all but three states had enacted such laws. Currently 12 states – having nearly a third of the registered motorcycles in the U.S. – do not have motorcycle helmet use laws conforming to the federal highway safety standard. Those states represent approximately 25 percent of the U.S. population.

Louisiana became the most recent state to repeal its helmet law since Congress eliminated penalties that DOT could levy against states that revoke such laws. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 11, No. 14, Aug. 30, 1976.) The other states are: Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and South Dakota. Three other states – California, Illinois and Utah – either had no such law or had a limited law before the Congressional action.

## School Buses To Be Checked For CO Hazards

Potential carbon monoxide hazards in school buses are being examined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in response to Congressional concern about the problem.

Late this summer, NHTSA asked state officials to begin testing school buses for carbon monoxide levels under various environmental conditions. If the results, which NHTSA expects to have by next summer, show that hazardous conditions exist, the agency will conduct a further study on how to eliminate the problem, an NHTSA official told *Status Report*.

Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1976, which were considered but not passed by the Congress, the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency would have had a year to comprehensively examine carbon monoxide hazards in school buses and other sustained use vehicles, such as taxicabs, and recommend any action it felt might be necessary. The Clean Air Amendments died as a result of a Senate filibuster.

The carbon monoxide provision of the Clean Air Act was sponsored by Rep. Edward Koch (D-N.Y.) who originally had wanted not only a study, but standards for acceptable carbon monoxide levels in school buses. Such a provision passed the House, but was subsequently limited to a one year study by a House-Senate conference committee before it died on the floor of the Senate.

### UPDATE . . .

**BUS BRAKES:** The current suspension of the stopping distance and "no lockup" requirements for air brake equipped buses has been extended until Sept. 1, 1977 by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The suspension, which went into effect in January 1976, was originally granted because of the erratic performance of the Rockwell antilock system used on most buses. To provide time to field test new antilock systems for buses, NHTSA had granted a suspension until Jan. 1, 1977. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 11, No. 9, June 7, 1976.)

NHTSA said it extended the suspension so that manufacturers could have one full year to test the equipment under all environmental conditions.

**FILM AWARD:** *Crashes That Need Not Kill*, an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety film, was selected as "Best in Category" and awarded a bronze medal at the Virgin Island Film Festival. Earlier, the new color documentary which details the history and operation of passenger restraint systems received the Golden Eagle from the Council on International Nontheatrical Events. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 11, No. 17, Nov. 2, 1976.) Additional prints of the film are now available and the waiting time for free loans has been reduced. Loan and purchase requests should be sent to Harvest Films A-V, Inc., 309 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10016.

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the highway  
loss reduction

### STATUS REPORT

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(AREA CODE 202-333-0770)

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