

PROPOSAL FOR REORGANIZATION OF THE STATE ROADS COMMISSION

February 12, 1959

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the General Assembly:

The importance to Maryland of an adequate highway system cannot be over-emphasized. Good modern highways not only provide safety and convenience to the traveling public, but also enhance our economic welfare by inducing new business and industry to locate within our State. In order that my views on the Maryland highway system and the organization of the State Roads Commission not be misunderstood, I consider it desirable to address the Maryland Legislature in Joint Session.

The State Roads Commission of Maryland spends more money each year than any other agency of the State. During the past several years, the Commission has spent close to \$100 million a year for highway construction, improvement and maintenance. I intend to see that every dollar spent is wisely spent, and that the traveling public receives the best roads possible for its tax dollars.

Several months ago, I made a public statement on a proposed reorganization of the State Roads Commission, and in some quarters that statement was misunderstood or misinterpreted. Under my proposed reorganization plan, the leadership and direction of the State Roads Commission will not be decentralized, but will be more strongly centralized and strengthened, I wish, at the outset, to emphasize this point. My proposal is aimed at modernizing and centralizing the State Roads Commission so that Maryland will be able to accomplish its construction schedule of Interstate, Primary and Secondary highways as rapidly and efficiently as possible.

There now are approximately 4,700 miles of roads in the State highway system of Maryland. Of this 4,700 miles, approximately 353 miles comprise the Interstate System. Until very recent years the State Roads Commission broke down the remainder of its highways system into Primary and Secondary highways. The Primary System was comprised of trunk lines or main roads leading from one county seat to another county seat, or one major geographic area to another major geographic area of the State, and comprised approximately 1,670 miles. The Secondary System, which was made up of feeder roads connecting with the Primary System or the Main roads, consisted of approximately 3,130 miles.