

HOUSE No. 2760

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, March 20, 1956.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.

In order that there be no interruption in either the normal spring maintenance work on the highways or the engineering planning on the combined regular and accelerated highway programs, I recommend that in advance of the general appropriation bill you make at this time certain adjustments of appropriations now available and additional appropriations from the Highway Fund totalling \$2,400,000. There are three activities for which appropriations should be supplemented for this fiscal year. If you approve my recommendations, you will make an additional amount of \$4,518,500 available for these three accounts.

Engineering and Administration. — In the appropriation bill for 1956 you provided that certain salaries previously charged against bond issue appropriations should be paid out of appropriations for highway activities. The major effect of this was on the so-called engineering account, 2900-02, where the amount which you added for this purpose has proved to be too small. An analysis of the work necessary to carry the normal load and preliminary surveys, plans and specifications for the accelerated program shows that we should have for the balance of the year an additional amount of \$1,148,500. According to the schedule below, I recommend that \$400,000 of this be taken from the Highway Fund, and the balance from existing appropriations.

Maintenance. — Several factors combine to require an additional amount for this account of \$1,770,000, of which I

recommend that \$400,000 be taken from the Highway Fund and the balance transferred from unallotted appropriations. The actual costs of performing highway maintenance work have increased because of the need of maintaining a large number of newly constructed areas where the natural topography has been disturbed and the bases of new grass have not yet been firmly established, and because drainage control requires constant attention during the adjustment period. The increases approved by the Department of Public Utilities last fall in truck rental rates have further contributed to the need of additional funds.

The maintenance appropriation, moreover, has been most adversely affected by both hurricane and flood work. In the 1954 hurricanes the department used its maintenance appropriation on an emergency basis, with some expectation that reimbursement would be available from the Hurricane Bond Relief Fund. When, however, request was made for about \$1,300,000, it was determined that these were more properly charges from the Highway Fund than from the Hurricane Relief Fund which is a General Fund charge. As a result, an amount which might have been carried over into the current fiscal year was not available.

This has not been true in the case of flood relief work, because you set up a special appropriation for this purpose from the Highway Fund, but a very substantial amount of miscellaneous work, such as cleaning culverts, repairing eroded banks, broken pipes, damaged shoulders, etc., has been done by the forces of the department, but has not lent itself to segregation so that specific vouchers could be presented for reimbursement claims.

Snow Removal. — This account provides not only for the cost of snow and ice control on state highways and town roads, but for removing sand and cleaning up after the season is over. Our present very effective sanding program is more expensive in a season of frequent freezing-thawing periods than in one in which the snow fall is heavy. Here again, the recently approved increase in rental rates for hired equipment has increased costs. My original recommendation for \$4,500,000 for this account was reduced by

\$300,000. A week ago our best estimate was that the work would cost \$5,000,000 this year, but the two recent storms will cost us at least \$800,000 more and make it necessary to secure the additional funds without delay. I therefore recommend for account 2900-08 a supplementary appropriation of \$1,600,000.

In view of the above situation, I am recommending that you make the following changes in appropriations for 1956:

2900-02	Highway engineering and administration .	increase	\$1,148,500
2900-04	Maintenance and operation of highways .	increase	1,770,000
2900-08	Snow removal	increase	1,600,000
2900-12	Construction and improvement of through routes	decrease	1,244,000
2900-35	Resurfacing state highways	decrease	129,500
2900-36	Construction and reconstruction of certain bridges	decrease	130,000
2900-48	Foremen's garages	decrease	615,000

CHRISTIAN A. HERTER,
Governor of the Commonwealth.

