APPENDIX K

POSITION STATEMENT ON AN EX¼AMDED. LOW-COST NATIONAL ACCIDENT DATA COLLECTION PROGRAM

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February 7, 1975

POSITION STATEMENT
ON
AN EXPANDED, LOW-COST NATIONAL ACCIDENT DATA COLLECTION PROGRAM

February 7, 1975

J. Robert cromack~ Southwest Research Institute: B. J. Campbell. Highway Safety Research Center, University of North Carolina; Lawrence Patrick, Wayne State University; Brian O'Neill, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

present real-world accident data have some deficiencies and limitations for both researchers and policymakers. Despite these limitations, much progress has been made on the basis of these data and useful information will continue to be obtained from these sources. However, much can and should be done to improve real-world accident data.

One major contribution would be the development of a large scale accident data base, possibly modeled on the data base developed at the Highway Safety Research Center of the University of North Carolina. This would require the upgrading of police accident reporting in a number of states and combining the data into a single base that could be assessed both by researchers and policymakers. Ideally, real-world accident data in such a base should include a measure, or measures, of both crash and injury severity.

At the present time the only available measure of crash severity is obtainable from the vehicle deformation or crush appropriately defined in relation to the manner of damage. Crash severities derived from vehicle deformation or crush can, however, only be compared among vehicles of the same make and model. It is possible that future research will enable the grouping of similar types and styles of vehicles with respect to crash

severities so derived, but at present there are no strong objective data to support such comparisons. Additional controlled laboratory type experimentation is needed to verify crash severity measures obtained from vehicle deformation or crash.

Meanwhile there are additional descriptors of real-world accidents that could be valuable to both researchers and policymakers. Crash recorders could provide such additional data. It seems likely that sophisticated recorders will continue to be too expensive to be deployed in the very large numbers needed to substantially augment present real-world data. Serious efforts should be devoted towards the development and large scale deployment of very inexpensive crash recorders that are designed to record a small number of Parameters that can be related to the severity of the crash.

The present measures of injury severity obtained from police accident reports are far from satisfactory and considerable efforts should also be devoted to upgrading these measures. Ideally, injuries should be classified either by the Abbreviated Injury Scale and its derivatives such as the Injury Severity Score or other appropriate injury scales.

A better understanding Of the nature and effect of traffic accidents can result from an expanded low Cost, well planned National Accident Data Collection program. The increased availability of data so derived will provide a higher confidence in the results derived from analysis of these data. It should be a major goal of such an effort to investigate the correlation between injury and damage, a topic presently not addressed due to inadequate data, but one that promises Significant Clarification to the problem of injury causation.

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February 7, 1975

Mr. Howard P. Gates, Jr.
Economics and Science Planning
1200 - 18th Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Mr. Gates:

Enclosed is the approximate concensus of the persons working on the assigned Issue No. 2. In the interest of time, I am sending you this document without final approval from each of the members. They will, however, receive copies of this letter and should they object too strenuously to any of the final changes or corrections, I feel certain you will hear from them.

In all fairness to them, I must state that I added the last paragraph based on my own convictions. It probably represents (at least in general) their views but this is the major divergence from the last draft position statement that was circulated. Incidentally, Larry Patrick did not have an opportunity to comment on the position statement after making several original contributions at our meeting on January 17.

None of the participants indicated an intention to take a position on Federal funding or inducements. Again, it was a pleasure to work with you and the other individuals at the workshop. I look forward to future meetings.

Sincerely,

J. Robert Cromack, Manager
Vehicle Safety Section
Department of Special Projects
Automotive Research Division

JRC:mr
Enclosure
cc: Lawrence Patrick
B. J. Campbell
Brian O'Neill

POSITION STATEMENT - ISSUE 2

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