

**Western Association of State Highway  
and Transportation Officials**

**Resolution 8-04**

**Study of Proposed Public Forest Service Roads**

**Whereas**, National Forests provide more recreation opportunities than any other federally owned lands, over 800 million visits in 1999 alone; and

**Whereas**, the National Forest Road System is approximately 380,000 miles, and a portion is an important link in the rural transportation system of the United States of America essential to the economic viability of many rural communities; and

**Whereas**, almost all visitors to National Forests use Forest Service roads to reach their destinations; and

**Whereas**, the National Forest Road System is in serious disrepair, with a growing backlog of deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs over \$10 billion; and

**Whereas**, funding for the maintenance, construction, and reconstruction of the National Forest Road System is currently provided from the general treasury of the United States; and

**Whereas**, funding for construction of the National Park Service's Park Roads and Parkways System, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Indian Reservation Road System, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Refuge Roads System is currently provided with gas tax funds from the Highway Trust Fund of the United States; and

**Whereas**, about 60,000 miles of the Forest Service Road System are operated and maintained so that they are available for use by all vehicle types licensed for use on public roads in the United States; and

**Whereas**, over 80% of the use of the Forest Service road system is on the 80,000 miles of road that the Forest Service operates for all vehicle types; and

**Whereas**, about 60,000 of the 80,000 miles of the road system the Forest Service operates for all vehicle types is essential to the general commerce of nearby rural communities and available for the free movement of forest visitors and local residents alike; and

**Whereas,** the Forest Service has declared itself to be a public road agency; and

**Whereas,** between 1990 and 1998, 9,200 miles of Forest Service roads became unusable to passenger cars because of deteriorated conditions; and

**Whereas,** about half of the backlog of deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs is on the 80,000 miles of roads operated for all vehicles types, with an ever-increasing risk that more of these miles will become unusable to passenger car traffic.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved,** WASHTO endorses a study to determine whether it is in the public interest to create an approximately 80,000 mile Public Forest Service Road system that supports the general commerce of rural communities and would be operated and maintained by the Forest Service for all vehicle types.

**Be it further resolved,** that this resolution be sent to AASHTO for their consideration and adoption.

Approved March 30, 2004  
WASHTO Board of Directors

Attest

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Secretary-Treasurer