

## INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 7, 1985

**TO:** Mr. Brooks Nichols, Asst. Chief - Design

**FROM:** Veral Pinkerton, Bridge Engineer

**SUBJECT:** Standard Policy Regarding Bridge  
Deck Overlay or Replacement

Due to the large quantity of bridge widening and remodeling that is coming up in the future it will be desirable to have some procedure or policy to make the decision as to whether a deck is to be replaced or overlaid.

Some attitudes and recent developments which will affect this work are:

1. As a result of questions by FHWA and at the request of Mr. Cooper, Maintenance Division has inspected bridge deck overlays and prepared a report which in my opinion will cast more suspicion on the overlay system.
2. Bob Apel of FHWA generally supports the concept of replacement.
3. As a general rule the district people will want a new deck (economize in someone else's district!).
4. Hopefully, the Specifications Committee will soon complete the specification for Painting of Existing Structural Steel. At this tie it appears certain that this new spec will lead to a standard policy of removing all the existing paint to bare metal. (Do a first class job regardless of cost! I do not support this policy which will increase bridge painting costs for painting existing steel on remodeling projects by about 50 percent).
5. The cost of replacement of concrete bridge deck is on the order of 2.5 to 4 times the cost of a concrete overlay. On highways where the narrow concrete girder type bridges have been widened and overlaid and our most unsatisfactory jobs obtained the ratio will be greater than 4 to 1 due to the requirements for a detour and the fact that complete superstructure replacement will be required.

Your comments on a course of action will be appreciated.

Handwritten:

*On projects where FHWA will participate in new decks - Replace*

*c: Mr. Cooper*

*Bridge*

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