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The State first took action to improve Maryland roads in 1898, when the General Assembly ordered the Maryland Geological Survey Commission to make a survey of State roads and write a report. In 1904 the first law authorizing State aid for road building put this program under the supervision of the Highway Division of the Survey Commission, which performed this function until the creation of the State Roads Commission by Chapter 141, Acts of 1908. The State Roads Commission now consists of seven members appointed by the Governor for terms of four years. The Chairman of the Commission, also known as the Director of Highways, is appointed from the State at large. One member is appointed from Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, or Worcester County; one from Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, or St. Mary's County; one from Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, or Washington County; one from Montgomery or Prince George's County; one from Baltimore, Harford, or Howard County; and one from the City of Baltimore. At least two of the members must belong to whichever of the two leading political parties in the State is not the party of the Governor. The Chairman holds office at the pleasure of the Governor.

The Director of Highways has exclusive jurisdiction over the location, construction, geometrics, design, and maintenance of the highways that embrace the Interstate and the Primary systems of highways. He has authority to confer with and conclude agreements with the Bureau of Public Roads and other agencies of the United States government, representatives of other States, and other agencies within this State on all questions relating to all highways on the Interstate and Primary systems. The Director also has jurisdiction over the engineering and right-of-way departments of the Commission and the Commission's entire administrative organization. From time to time he calls upon the other members of the Commission individually or jointly for advice.

The Commission, meeting jointly, formulates policy relating to location, type, design, construction, and maintenance of the Secondary system of highways. The Commission member from the area where the secondary road under consideration is located must inform the other members of the Commission of local conditions affecting these decisions. Once the policy for each road has been set, the Director of Highways undertakes its construction and maintenance.

The Commission recommends any over-all highway improvement program to the Governor and Legislature; and meeting jointly, it also recommends plans for highway financing. The Commission determines the extent to which consulting engineers are employed on the entire State Highway System, but the Director of Highways has sole power to select such engineers. The Commission also determines the general working conditions and salary recommendations for its employees. The Director of Highways carries out all policies determined by the Commission and performs all its actions, including the execution of contracts, agreements, and other documents.

The State Highway system is divided into primary and secondary highways. The official State highway map published by the State Roads Commission constitutes the basis for distinguishing the two. Highways