



# Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

March 9, 1999

Metric Versus English

COUNTY ENGINEERS/SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS  
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS/DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

#99-6

The Task Group appointed to study if the department should continue to use the metric system has completed its work and recommended a return to the English system. The recommendation, along with several caveats, has been accepted. Accordingly, all new project starts should be in the English system. Projects which have been started in the metric system may be completed in that system.

The Division of Highways will continue to maintain manuals and other similar documents in the dual system as they now exist. The exception is the new Design Manual which is a metric document but will have English units added before it is finalized. All of the Division's computer programs have been designed to handle either English or metric units, so no changes are necessary.

The Federal Highway Administration will continue to work in the metric system as mandated by the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988. FHWA's data gathering efforts and national research will require that some elements of the department continue to work with the metric system.

AASHTO has indicated that they will work in dual units since some states will stay with the metric system, while others are changing back to the English system. At this writing, 26 states have indicated they will continue in the metric system, 16 will revert to the English system and the remaining states have yet to decide their position.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation as the department deliberated its position on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darrell McMurray".

Darrell W. McMurray, P.E.  
Engineer of Local Roads and Streets