

Crumbling Roads and Bridges

Larry Adams

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To: Brewer City Council; Mayor Jerry W. Goss; Councilor Kevin O'Connell; Brewer City Manager; Eddington Board of Selectman and Town Manager; Carol Woodcock / U.S. Senator Susan Collins; Elizabeth Montgomery Schneider MacTaggart / U.S. Senator Angus King; Representative Arthur Verow - District#21; Representative David Johnson - District#20; Rosemary Winslow / U.S. Congressman Mike Michaud; Senator Edward Youngblood - District#31;

Cc: Personal addresses redacted.

Good afternoon to all:

Senator Collins quoted some of the same data in her June 21st weekly column as I have been providing to you over the past several months; however, I humbly offer that when Senator Collins says the same thing, it carries a little more weight.

Senator Collins stated that the poor condition of our roads and bridges ends up costing Maine drivers, on average, an extra \$299 a year in car repairs. How much is that statewide? Read the following quote from the TRIP research group using that same \$299/year figure:

Driving on rough roads costs the average Maine motorist an average of \$299 annually in extra vehicle operating costs, a total of \$301 million statewide. Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

http://www.tripnet.org/docs/ME_Transportation_by_the_Numbers_TRIP_Report_Oct_2012.pdf

The State of Maine needs to take a hard look at our failing infrastructure, the forecasted shortfalls in the Maine Highway Fund and the Federal Highway Trust Fund, the recent downgrade in Transportation Bonds and the sluggish economic recovery before funding any new projects. This State needs to attack our failing infrastructure head-on with every asset that it can muster. Asphalt prices alone have increased more than threefold (323%) over the past decade; delaying the repair and replacement of our failing infrastructure will only cost us more money in the end. Existing infrastructure must take priority over new construction.

Please support the NO-BUILD alternative for the I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study; that money can be best spent rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure.



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Jun 21 2013

"Investment Needed to Repair Crumbling Roads and Bridges"

Senator Susan Collins

The American Society of Civil Engineers recently issued a report card giving Maine's transportation infrastructure a grade of C-minus. The poor condition of our state's roads and bridges ends up costing Maine drivers, on average, an extra \$299 a year in car repairs. As this report card concluded, "the health, safety and welfare of our citizens are directly tied to the quality of our infrastructure."

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 32 percent of Maine's bridges are deficient, which is more than the national average of 25 percent. There are nearly 800 deficient bridges in Maine. The Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates that its annual required investment to maintain good repair for our highways and bridges would cost \$355 million, which is \$110 million above the amount the state is able to spend.

Being classified as "deficient" doesn't mean a bridge is going to fall down anytime soon. But it does signify that the bridge needs serious rehabilitation. The terrifying bridge collapse that occurred recently in Washington state magnifies the importance of properly maintaining our nation's highways and bridges.

Our national highway system contains too much infrastructure that is now well past its useful life. Some bridges are more than 100 years old; many are unable to accommodate today's traffic volumes. In fact, one in nine of the nation's bridges is rated as structurally deficient, and the average age of the nation's 607,000 bridges is 42 years old.

The FHWA estimates that we must invest more than \$101 billion at all levels of government each year just to maintain our highways and bridges over the next 15 years. Improving the system to meet future demands will require \$170 billion each year. This will prove difficult given that revenues collected for the Highway Trust Fund already do not support the current level of spending.

The math is clear: the Trust Fund collected \$40 billion in revenue last year, but spent close to \$50 billion. This is not a new problem; there has been a shortfall every year for the past five years. By the end of next year, Congress will have transferred nearly \$54 billion in General Funds into the Highway Trust Fund in order to ensure its solvency. In order for states and localities to plan and build long-term projects, they must have guaranteed funding to support the critical infrastructure investments.

Transportation is one of the largest sectors of the U.S. economy, representing nearly ten percent of the nation's gross domestic product, and it's one of the largest generators of good-paying jobs. Improving the efficiency and reliability of the nation's transportation system is vital to the movement of freight and people and is critical to our economy.

I serve as the Ranking Member of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee. Our committee recently held a hearing to draw attention to our outdated and overburdened highways and bridges, and the need to make long-term investments in programs that will help fix them.

I am a strong advocate of one of these programs, the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER, grants program. I have supported Maine DOT's successful efforts to obtain \$20 million to replace the Memorial Bridge linking Maine and New Hampshire. The new Memorial Bridge is set to open this summer. In addition, I have secured \$10.8 million to replace the bridge between Richmond and Dresden, and more than \$5 million to replace the aging Martin Memorial Bridge in Rumford. All of these bridges were past their expected lives and needed replacement, like so many other bridges across our nation. I continue to advocate for additional TIGER funding for several other infrastructure projects around Maine.

It's clear that additional investments are necessary. While the President has requested \$50 billion in immediate transportation investments to spur economic investment and rebuild America, I am disappointed that this was not supported with a serious proposal to finance it.

I do, however, share the Administration's belief that investment in transportation is critical to our economy. We must work together to find fiscally responsible solutions. Such investments create jobs, provide lasting assets, move commerce and pave the way for a better economic future.

Permalink: <http://www.collins.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2013/6/investment-needed-to-repair-crumbling-roads-and-bridges>

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