

The 1st Quarter of 2018 in the 18th year of the I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study/Project...



News Release for August 1, 2011

"Adding more miles to our transportation system in this current fiscal environment doesn't make financial sense," said Bernhardt, "Our responsibility going forward is to manage our existing infrastructure within our existing budget." With current funding levels stable at best, MaineDOT concluded that the expenditure of funds on new infrastructure was not justifiable. "We are struggling to maintain the roads and bridges we currently have in safe and serviceable condition."

August 11, 2011 - MaineDOT Commissioner Bernhardt

MDOT's own documentation decries 2B-2 met only 20% of purpose and needs in Apr2009. An identical alternative (2B) was removed from consideration in Jan2003 for serious safety concerns and the failure to satisfy the system linkage and the traffic congestion needs.

I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study
PAC Meeting April 15, 2009



Purpose and Needs Matrix

| Alternatives | Meets Purpose | | Meets Needs | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| | Study Purpose | USACE Purpose | System Linkage | Safety Concerns | Traffic Congestion |
| No-Build | No | No | No | No | No |
| Alternative 1-Upgrade | No | No | No | No | No |
| 2B-2 | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| 3A-3EIK-1 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 3EIK-2 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 5A2E3K | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 5A2E3K-1 | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| 5A2E3K-2 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 5B2E3K-1 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |



"They [MaineDOT] have been very intransigent about continuing the conversation."

Bill Sutter | Wiscasset resident | Portland Press Herald 11.09.2017

www.i395-r9-study.com

What is it about **NO** that they don't seem to understand??

"The people further find that the decisions of state agencies regarding transportation needs and facilities are often made in isolation, without sufficient comprehensive planning and opportunity for meaningful public input and guidance."

"The MDOT can't really tell you the truth because the truth doesn't work."

Ralph Doering | Wiscasset Resident | 12.2017

Actual text from Title 23: §73. Transportation Policy.

The [MaineDOT Interactive Work Plan](#) (as posted 12.27.2017) mirrors the [MaineDOT 2017-2019 Work Plan](#) with an added funding increase of \$1.5 million. What this means is anybody's guess...

Interactive Work Plan

Find projects and transportation expenditures in your area.

To find Work Plan projects in your area, either select the name of your municipality in the dropdown box below, then click on the "Go" button to review reports, or view projects in our Map viewer by selecting the Map Viewer link below.

Please Note the Following:

- This report shows the current Work Plan entries for each town. It also includes a listing of maintenance work specifically recorded to each town, any Local Road Assistance payments and capital projects that were completed in the previous year.
- All documents related to the Work Plan are in the Adobe PDF Format.
- If you have questions about using this tool, or problems accessing the information, please contact [MaineDOT](#).

Search by Town/Municipality

Brewer

Go

Maine Department of Transportation

Work Plan for Calendar Years 2018-2019-2020

Brewer

This report shows the 2018-2020 Work Plan entries for Brewer. The costs listed are the total cost of these projects – some of which may extend into neighboring towns. It also shows a listing of maintenance work specifically recorded to Brewer in 2017, as well as any 2017 Local Road Assistance payments. Activities that are managed on a larger scale, such as snow & ice control, and maintenance work done by contract are not listed. The maintenance accomplishments may also extend into neighboring towns, but are listed in the first town where the work was reported. Finally, any capital projects that were completed in 2017 are also listed.

Planned Capital and Maintenance Work 2018-2020

| | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Work Plan Year: 2018 | | | |
| Municipalities(s): Brewer, Eddington, Holden | | | |
| Asset(s): Interstate 395, Route 9 Connector | | | |
| Description: Beginning 0.25 of a mile west of Interstate 395 with Route 1A, roughly paralleling the Brewer-Holden town line extending 6.00 miles to Route 9 west of Chemo Pond Road (in the vicinity of Lois Lane). | | | |
| ID | Scope of Work | Highway Corridor Priority | Estimated Funding |
| 018915.00 | Highway Construction/ Rehabilitation Highway Improvements - PE Only | | \$8,750,000 |

From the MaineDOT 2017-2018-2019 Work Plan:

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| 018915.00 | Brewer, Eddington, Holden | Highway Construction/ Rehabilitation Highway Improvement-PE Only | Interstate 395, Route 9 Connector | Beginning 0.25 of a mile west of Interstate 395 with Route 1A, roughly paralleling the Brewer-Holden town line, extending 6.00 miles to Route 9 west of Chemo Pond Road (in the vicinity of Lois Lane). | \$7,250,000 |
| 2017 | | | | | |

The Official [MaineDOT 2018-2019-2020 Work Plan](#)



Work Plan

Calendar Years 2018-2019-2020

Funding for the connector has been increased by \$1.5 million since last year's plan!



State Funding - State revenue forecasts guide the Work Plan's assumptions about what revenues will be available from the State Highway Fund. Major state resource assumptions in this Work Plan also include both voter-approved bonding and anticipated future state bonding, which continue to be a critical component of state funds. In November 2017, Maine voters approved a \$100 million General Obligation (G.O.) bond to fund the state transportation program in 2018. Based on voter approval of transportation bond referenda in recent years, this Work Plan also assumes Governor, Legislative and voter approval for \$100 million in G.O. bonding in CY 2019 and \$100 million again in CY 2020. The Work Plan also assumes there will be sufficient State Highway Fund dollars to fund 600 miles of paving by the Light Capital Paving Program. While additional resources may arise from federal grant programs, public-private partnerships, and other circumstances, the Work Plan does not make assumptions regarding those possibilities. Some lesser and very conservative assumptions for smaller projected amounts include municipal and private matching funds, year-end balances from federal programs and typical carryover amounts.

| ID/Year | Municipality | Scope | Name | Description | Funding |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------|
| 018915.00 2018 | Brewer, Eddington, Holden | Highway Construction/ Rehabilitation Highway Improvements - PE Only | Interstate 395, Route 9 Connector | Beginning 0.25 of a mile west of Interstate 395 with Route 1A, roughly paralleling the Brewer-Holden town line, extending 6.00 miles to Route 9 west of Chemo Pond Road (in the vicinity of Lois Lane). | \$8,750,000 |

| Core Highway and Bridge Programs CY 2017-2018-2019 <i>Work Plan</i> vs. Need, to Meet Statutory Goals (in millions of \$) | | | | |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Work Group | Average Annual \$ from 2017-2018-2019 <i>Work Plan</i> | Annual \$ Needed to Meet Basic Statutory Goals | Average Annual \$ Shortfall | Dollar % Shortfall* |
| Bridge Projects | \$121 | \$140 | -\$19 | -13% |
| Highway Reconstruction/Rehab | \$78 | \$100 | -\$22 | -22% |
| Pavement Preservation | \$90 | \$108 | -\$18 | -17% |
| Light Capital Paving | \$27 | \$27 | \$0 | 0% |
| Total - Core Programs | \$316 | \$375 | -\$59 | -16% |

Missing from this year's plan is a breakdown of the Core Highway and Bridge Programs as included in prior year's, such as last year (left). Not sure what that means; are previous annual -\$59 million shortfalls, as documented in January 2017, been "masked" by presuming passage of future \$100 million G.O. bonding in 2018 and 2019 election cycles??

Does the DOT Core Highway and Bridge Program meet Maine Statutory Goals as of January 2018??

Bonds are not free; the aforementioned 2017 G.O. bond will cost Mainers \$29 million to maturity. The DOT will spend \$8.75 million of our state's limited transportation funds engineering a connector that Brewer citizens and the Brewer City Council do not want and do not support!! Wouldn't those funds be better spent on Maine's unmet needs??

Portland Press Herald

ELECTIONS

Posted November 5, 2017 | Updated November 5, 2017

INCREASE FONT SIZE 

Question 3 asks voters to approve \$105 million bond for roads and bridges

The money would be spent on highway construction, ports, railroads and stream crossing improvements.

BY **PETER MCGUIRE** STAFF WRITER



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[Question 3 on the ballot is a transportation bond](#) that will be used to match about \$137 million in federal and other funding.

The general obligation bond is the second of three consecutive years of borrowing planned by the Maine Department of Transportation to fill annual highway funding shortfalls. Voters overwhelmingly approved a \$100 million bond in 2016 and another is planned for the November 2018 ballot. Despite the borrowing, Maine DOT has a \$59 million annual funding gap for work on roads and bridges.

The total lifetime cost of the 10-year bond would be almost \$134 million, including nearly \$29 million in interest, according to the Office of the Treasurer.

“The reality is, Maine DOT depends on the passage of this bond to deliver the essential road and bridge projects it has outlined in its three-year work plan,” said Maria Fuentes, executive director of the Maine Better Transportation Association, a trade group that lobbies for highway projects. “This bond is desperately needed to prevent cuts to the existing Maine DOT work plan.”

In a report released last week, TRIP, a national transportation research group, estimated that 14 percent of Maine’s state and locally maintained bridges are structurally deficient, the ninth-highest rate in the U.S. The group considers a bridge structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or important components.

A [2016 report card](#) from the American Society of Civil Engineers gave Maine bridges a C- and Maine roads a D, grades unchanged since the group’s last report in 2012.

Maine lawmakers have for years debated how to generate more revenue for the state’s highway fund to overcome persistent budget shortfalls. This session, legislators considered bills to [increase the gas tax and add fees for electric cars](#), but none made it past the transportation committee.

Maine voters typically support transportation bonding. Last year, a \$100 million bond was approved with 61 percent of the vote, and an \$85 million transportation bond received 73 percent of the vote in 2015. Another \$100 million bond was passed with 71 percent of the vote in 2013, according to Secretary of State’s Office record

They were against bond initiatives before they were for them:

Portland Press Herald

Gov. Paul LePage's nominees for farm agency, DHHS confirmed

Several Democrats question whether an ex-lobbyist can do the job at DHHS. Meanwhile, the pick for DOT advances.

Posted February 9, 2011

BY [REBEKAH METZLER](#)

(Excerpt of original article)

AUGUSTA — David Bernhardt, Gov. Paul LePage's pick to lead the Department of Transportation, won unanimous support from a panel of lawmakers Tuesday after being [questioned about future funding for the state's infrastructure](#).

During his hearing, Bernhardt said the administration would oppose raising the gas tax and any new bonding initiatives to raise money.

"We have to leave no stone unturned," he said, responding to questions from Democrats on the Legislature's Transportation Committee. "We need to be able to tell the people, the department is as efficient and cost-effective as it can be, I believe, before we can go out and ask for more additional funding than we already receive."

Bernhardt, a 26-year veteran of the Department of Transportation, said the state must re-evaluate its priorities and seek to partner with municipalities to help share the burden of transportation projects. He also said the federal government will have to step in eventually to help states cope with continued transportation funding shortfalls.

"The states cannot take this on by themselves, and what we need to do is get our business practices ready for when something does happen," he said. "But I've got to believe in the next two years, something's got to happen, something's got to give."

Transportation Bonds during the current LePage/Bernhardt administration:

| | |
|------|--------------------------------|
| 2012 | \$51.5 million |
| 2013 | \$100 million |
| 2015 | \$ 85 million |
| 2016 | \$100 million |
| 2017 | \$105 million |
| 2018 | \$100 million (2018 Work Plan) |
| 2019 | \$100 million (2018 Work Plan) |

"During his hearing, Bernhardt said the administration would oppose...any new bonding initiatives to raise money."

New look for our citizen's website:

"I-395/Route 9 Hard Look"

Citizens taking a "hard look" at the I-395 Route 9 Transportation Study.



Home

Welcome to the I-395/Route 9 Hard Look website!!!

I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study
PAC Meeting April 15, 2009

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| 5A2E3K-2 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 5B2E3K-1 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

www.i395-r9-study.com



What is it about **NO** that they don't seem to understand??



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-OR- select a subject in the hyperlinked menu to the top or to the right.

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 - Newspapers
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 - FOAA Discovery
 - Unanswered Questions
 - Unavailable Documents
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| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| ■ Total Count: | 44504 |
| ■ Visitors Today: | 32 |
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“Half of the undisclosed amount of money...would go into something called the **Infrastructure Incentives Initiative**. But the plan has one provision that changes all of this: **Grant awards can't exceed 20% of total project costs.**”

Strong Towns | 1.29.2018

SPENDING PRIORITIES

Half of the undisclosed amount of money (widely believed to be in the \$200 billion range) would go into something called the **Infrastructure Incentives Initiative**. This has all the hallmarks of the worst of federal infrastructure spending: anything infrastructure-related is eligible, any government or public authority can apply, scoring is heavily weighted to induce local governments to take on lots of debt and there is only faint concern for long term maintenance costs or return on investment. Yuck!

But the plan has one provision that changes all of this: Grant awards can't exceed 20% of total project costs. Wow! I've been on projects where the federal government paid 95% — an approach ripe with all the worst kinds of perverse incentives — but that won't happen here. **For a state or local government to get the federal money, they will need to have some serious skin in the game to the tune of 80% of the funding.** If that provision makes it through Congress (count me doubtful), it would be transformative.

With state and local governments picking up 80% of the tab, I suspect projects will naturally gravitate towards those of the smaller maintenance variety, particularly projects that have a positive return on investment (small, underground, and in older neighborhoods). It's harder to convince yourself that a negative-returning expansion project makes sense when you are spending your own money (and robbing from your already insolvent maintenance budget to do so). This dramatically reduces the worst incentives associated with federal infrastructure spending.

Instead of the grand, New Deal-style public works program that Trump's eye-popping price tag implies, Democratic lawmakers and mayors fear the plan would set up a vicious, zero-sum scramble for a relatively meager amount of federal cash—while forcing cities and states to scrounge up more of their own money, bringing a surge of privately financed toll roads, and shredding regulations in the name of building projects faster.

Lydia DePillis | January 30, 2018 (excerpt of original article)

President Trump is expected to use his State of the Union address Tuesday to announce his long-awaited plan for investing in America's infrastructure.

But his aides have already spoken publicly about the main features of the plan, and a [draft](#) obtained by Axios last week spells out some details...Based on that information, here are a few questions we can answer about Trump's infrastructure plan.

How big would it be? Trump has said repeatedly that he plans to invest \$1 trillion in repairing and upgrading America's infrastructure. Only \$200 billion of that, however, would come from direct federal spending, according to White House aides. The rest [\$800 billion] is supposed to come from state and local governments, which are expected to match any federal allocation by a four-to-one ratio. That's a reversal from precedent, in which the federal government has picked up around 80% of the cost of big projects.

How would the money be split up? According to the draft plan published by Axios, \$100 billion of the federal infrastructure spending would be parceled out as incentives to local government entities. No one state may receive more than 10% of that total. An additional \$20 billion would go toward "transformative projects." These are defined as "exploratory and groundbreaking ideas that have more risk than standard infrastructure projects but offer a larger reward profile," such as Elon Musk's Hyperloop. Federal funds would be allowed to cover a greater share of each of these projects. Another \$50 billion is earmarked for rural block grants, most of which will be given to states according to a formula based on the miles of rural roads and rural population they have. States can then spend that money on transportation, broadband, water, waste and power projects. The rest of the money would support infrastructure-related undertakings.

How would the plan be paid for? At the Conference of Mayors, Gribbin [Trump's special assistant for infrastructure] explained that the Trump administration is not proposing a specific funding mechanism for the infrastructure plan, saying that will be a conversation with Congress... Gribbin committed to leaving major pots of money intact, such as the Highway Trust Fund, but said that some existing spending may be "repurposed." "I can't tell you there's going to be no cut in any infrastructure programs in the federal government," Gribbin said.

I have added two articles to <http://i395rt9hardlook.com/> concerning Trump's proposed infrastructure plan.

"Trump has said repeatedly that he plans to invest \$1 trillion in repairing and upgrading America's infrastructure. Only \$200 billion of that, however, would come from direct federal spending, according to White House aides. The rest [\$800 billion] is supposed to come from state and local governments, which are expected to match any federal allocation by a four-to-one ratio. That's a reversal from precedent, in which the federal government has picked up around 80% of the cost of big projects." (CNN | Money 1.30.18)

What will the end-state funding percentage be if and when this proposal becomes reality? Will the DOT be so gung ho on 2B-2 if it costs the state \$48.8 million instead of \$12.2 million? Will the DOT fast-track 2B-2 in an attempt to obtain funding before this proposal is finalized?

With the possibility of such a drastic change in funding, the DOT should immediately halt wasting Maine's critical transportation dollars on 2B-2's engineering and eminent domain activities, immediately halt spending on the Wiscasset Bypass and the Presque Isle Bypass projects, and re-appropriate all existing and future funding, from the termination of these three highly controversial projects, to satisfy Maine's real unmet transportation needs.

Wiscasset property owner offers to pay town's expenses in fight over state traffic plan

The cash-strapped town is in negotiations with Maine DOT to resolve lawsuit over a controversial traffic project in the village center.

BY COLIN WOODARD

1.31.2018

(Excerpt of original article)

The owner of several properties affected by [Wiscasset's dispute with the state over a controversial traffic project in the village center](#) has offered to cover the town's legal bills in the matter. Ralph H Doering III, whose family owns several 19th-century commercial buildings on and near Main Street in the historic village center, made the offer in a Jan. 24 letter to town councilors that was made public Tuesday night.

Doering said the offer was prompted by concerns that the town would give up or severely compromise its fight against the Maine Department of Transportation because of the mounting costs to the cash-strapped midcoast community of 3,700. "The selectmen clearly want to defend Wiscasset and its laws and ordinances, but MDOT was going to make it financially difficult to do it," Doering told the Press Herald Wednesday from his home in Florida. "We don't know if they will accept the offer. But we want the town to be able to defend itself without having a financial considerations."

Wiscasset [filed suit](#) Nov. 28 to compel the state to abide by local ordinances and commitments made in an earlier agreement that had won the endorsement of residents in a local referendum. A lawyer for the town, John Shumadine, confirmed that Wiscasset is in negotiations with the department on the issue and said they "are making progress," but could not go into detail.

Doering, whose company has its own suit against the Department of Transportation waiting before an appeals court, said he was concerned the negotiations were being prompted by concerns over legal costs. In November, the town council voted "to accept donations of money to the Town" to supplement its appropriations to support legal action on the case.

It is not clear whether the town will accept Doering's offer, and town manager Marian Anderson did not respond to an interview request.

"The MDOT seems hell bent on this plan that is not going to work and they are obviously under some kind of orders or directive from the governor to do something about the traffic problem," Doering said.

Last year, Gov. Paul LePage responded to several constituent letters on the issue in forceful terms, describing the town as obstructionist. "I have given MDOT full authority to fix this nightmare with or without working with Wiscasset," LePage wrote a constituent in August. "After 65 years of trying to work with Wiscasset, the time has come to move on."

Nothing could be further from the truth...



“The MDOT can’t really tell you the truth because the truth doesn’t work.”

Ralph Doering | Wiscasset Resident | 12.2017

A friend of mine emailed recently: “Seems like your road issue has simmered down for now.” Sadly, nothing could be farther from the truth...

The MaineDOT does their most devastating work in the shadows, with zero public scrutiny. 32 months had passed—from April 2009, when 2B-2 met only 20% of purpose and needs at the same time that 3EIK-2 met 100% of purpose and needs and had already been recognized as MaineDOT/FHWA’s preferred alternative for the previous 6 years—until December 2011, when I accidentally discovered that 2B-2 had become the preferred alternative. Not one word for 32 months to community officials—not one word to impacted private citizens—and not one word to the study’s Public Advisory Committee. 32 months of premeditated silence led us to naively believe the project DOA...

In an attempt to give a false illusion of affordability, over those 32 months, decade-long engineering criteria was downgraded, study purpose and needs were parsed, leading to what the DOT would claim the “cheapest” alternative to construct—but—one that does not satisfy the original engineering criteria and study purpose and needs. Money became the sole determining factor.

The DOT met with impacted property owners in March 2016, the eminent domain process has been ongoing for almost two years, with an appropriation of \$8.75 million in CY 2018 for engineering and eminent domain activities. Don’t be surprised when you unexpectedly hear that 2B-2’s footprint has been, in some cases, forcibly established. I hope those losing their homes and/or properties are made whole; I fear they won’t and because this project is so money driven, there is every reason to believe that the DOT will purchase the bare minimum to establish 2B-2’s footprint, again with money as the sole determining factor, leaving useless properties, hopes and dreams behind in the process. Could be a blessing to some, but ruination to many...

Why does it seem the road issue has simmered down for now? Easy—the DOT is allowed to operate in the shadows without the necessity of accountability to the public that DOT officials are sworn to serve—or—as a Wiscasset resident rightly articulated last December under similar duress from the MaineDOT: “The MDOT can’t really tell you the truth because the truth doesn’t work.”

State officials rebut ‘rumors’ that new \$170M bridge is unsafe

By Staff, Portsmouth Herald • February 9, 2018

State transportation officials are responding to pushback over the delayed opening of the new Sarah Mildred Long Bridge, issuing a statement Friday saying the \$170 million project does not have serious problems.

“The Maine and New Hampshire Departments of Transportation are aware of the rumors circulating about why the new Sarah Mildred Long Bridge hasn’t opened and speculation that there is something wrong regarding safety or mechanical issues,” reads a statement released Friday morning by Maine DOT. “The fact is the bridge is operational and safe.”

Earlier this week, officials said the new bridge, which was originally scheduled to open to vehicular traffic Sept. 1 and since delayed multiple times, would not open until May. They cited general contractor Cianbro’s updated schedule for construction of the new bridge connecting Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Kittery, Maine along the Route 1 Bypass over the Piscataqua River.

Seacoast Media Group has filed a Maine Freedom of Access Act request with the MDOT in an effort to get more detailed information on the reasons for the delays and is awaiting a response.

According to Maine DOT’s statement on Friday, the bridge was formally “commissioned” in late January. “This means the bridge was successfully lifted and operated under a variety of simulated scenarios which would allow the Maine and New Hampshire Departments of Transportation to assume ‘ownership’ and operational responsibilities,” the Maine DOT statement reads. “Training of the New Hampshire DOT employees responsible for operating the bridge has been successfully completed. They are currently waiting to take over those operational duties.”

The Maine DOT said, “Most of the outstanding work items are routine, and much of the remaining work is either aesthetic or weather-dependent including weatherproofing, paint touch up, and pointing and patching of concrete. Maine and New Hampshire are now evaluating all options for opening the bridge sooner than what is indicated on Cianbro’s most recent schedule.”

Earlier this week, Maine DOT spokesman Ted Talbot said the transportation departments in both states “[share the public’s frustration](#) with Cianbro’s schedule.”

According to the construction contract, Cianbro faces a \$1,000-per-day penalty for each day the bridge is not open to vehicles beyond the Sept. 1, 2017, deadline. However, Talbot has previously stated there have been no discussions between DOT and Cianbro over how the penalties could be assessed. The deadline to complete the entire project, which includes removing the construction trestle adjacent the bridge, installing railroad tracks and landscaping on both sides of the span, is June 1. The contract states there are additional per-day penalties on Cianbro for each day after the June 1 deadline the project is not finished.

The original bridge opened in 1940 and closed in August 2016. Construction of the new bridge began in 2015.

[LePage administration wants to impose fee for electric cars](#)

The Associated Press • February 8, 2018 7:27 pm

Updated: February 8, 2018 7:31 pm

Koji Sasahara | AP | BDN

AUGUSTA, Maine — The LePage administration is proposing legislation that would add an annual fee on electric and hybrid cars in order to pay for highway maintenance.

The [Portland Press Herald](#) reports the measure would tack on a \$250 fee for electric vehicles and a \$150 fee for hybrids. Meghan Russo, manager of legislative services for MDOT, says the fee is being imposed because owners of hybrids and electric vehicles pay less in gas taxes than other vehicle owners.

Opponents of the legislation say it punishes drivers who use green technology. They say the LePage administration should reevaluate how the state pays for road maintenance, rather than target drivers of electric and hybrid cars.

Maine's highway maintenance is underfunded by \$60 million a year. Even with the proposed fees, the state would still face a funding shortfall.

Trump infrastructure plan relies on state, local funding

By Jonathan Lemire and Martin Crutsinger, The Associated Press • February 12, 2018 | John Locher | AP | BDN
(Excerpt)

President Donald Trump on Monday launched a “big week” for his long-awaited infrastructure plan, which envisions spurring \$1.5 trillion in spending over a decade to rebuild roads and highways. The plan would fulfill some Trump campaign goals but rely heavily on state and local government for much of the funding.

Trump said on Twitter that it would be “a big week for Infrastructure. After so stupidly spending \$7 trillion in the Middle East, it is now time to start investing in OUR Country!” He was meeting with state and local officials at the White House later in the day to drum up support.

The administration’s plan is centered on using \$200 billion in federal money to leverage local and state tax dollars to fix America’s infrastructure, such as roads, highways, ports and airports.

Trump has repeatedly blamed the “crumbling” state of the nation’s roads and highways for preventing the American economy from reaching its full potential. Many in Washington believe that Trump should have begun his term a year ago with an infrastructure push, one that could have garnered bipartisan support or, at minimum, placed Democrats in a bind for opposing a popular political measure.

Administration officials previewing the plan said it would feature two key components: an injection of funding for new investments and help speed up repairs of crumbling roads and airports, as well as a streamlined permitting process that would truncate the wait time to get projects underway. Officials said the \$200 billion in federal support would come from cuts to existing programs.

Half the money would go to grants for transportation, water, flood control, cleanup at some of the country’s most polluted sites and other projects.

States, local governments and other project sponsors could use the grants—which administration officials view as incentives—for no more than 20 percent of the cost. Transit agencies generally count on the federal government for half the cost of major construction projects, and federal dollars can make up as much as 80 percent of some highway projects.

About \$50 billion, would go toward rural projects — transportation, broadband, water, waste, power, flood management and ports. That is intended to address criticism from some Republican senators that the administration’s initial emphasis on public-private partnerships would do little to help rural, GOP-leaning states

The Associated Press writers Joan Lowy and Ken Thomas contributed to this report.



Legislative Outline for Rebuilding Infrastructure in America

THE WHITE HOUSE

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/INFRASTRUCTURE-211.pdf>

Portland Press Herald

BY [PETER MCGUIRE](#) STAFF WRITER | FEBRUARY 13, 2018

Owners of hybrids, all-electric vehicles fume over fee idea

Opponents at a public hearing drive home that they think the state plan is unfair and punishes 'socially conscious' consumers.

By PETER MCGUIRE
Staff Writer

Outraged vehicle owners piled into a public hearing Tuesday to denounce a bill from Gov. Paul LePage's administration that would slap hefty annual fees on hybrid and all-electric vehicles.



The Maine Department of Transportation has proposed annual fees of \$150 for hybrid vehicles and \$250 for electric cars because many owners pay lower gas taxes than drivers of standard vehicles, or no gas tax at all.

AVERAGE MAINER'S GAS TAXES: \$82 A YEAR

However, vehicle owners and environmentalists argued that the proposed fees were grossly out-of-scale and urged lawmakers to find new ways to fund highway maintenance.

Roughly 20 people spoke against the bill. Several noted that hybrid cars use gasoline at least part of the time, so owners already pay into the highway fund through the gas tax.

The average Mainer pays about \$82 in gas tax annually, said Andrea Maker, a lobbyist for the Alliance of Auto Manufacturers, a national trade group.

“The state’s highway fund is underfunded by about \$160 million a year, and the MDOT has borrowed hundreds of millions through state bonds in recent years to make up most of the shortfall.”

[Click here to view the complete Portland Press article.](#)



Trump's infrastructure plan just shifts costs to local taxpayers

Oh, that tax break in your paycheck? Don't spend it too soon, as they will certainly be asking for that back—and a whole lot more...

By Ben Sprague, Special to the BDN • February 14, 2018

A simple explanation of Trump's plan to fund our infrastructure repair:

“Instead of broadening and deepening the federal government's commitment, Trump's plan flips the federal funding formula on its head, requiring more local and state dollars to complete infrastructure projects. The result will be higher costs for local taxpayers and fewer infrastructure projects actually taking place.

As it stands, a typical road project, for example, is funded through a combination of local, state and federal dollars. The federal government has traditionally picked up 80 percent of the cost of most projects, with the remaining 20 percent coming from local and state sources. This has been a reasonable arrangement, as the formula recognizes that cities and towns should contribute a portion of the funds necessary to improve the roads within their boundaries while acknowledging that local taxpayers are already tapped out and cannot shoulder the full financial burden of projects that sometimes can run into the millions or even tens of millions of dollars.

Under Trump's plan, however, the federal government will fund just 20 percent of infrastructure projects, with the remaining 80 percent coming from “other sources,” which will likely be mostly state and local tax dollars. In a callous twist of language, the plan refers to this as an “incentive” for cities, towns and states to invest in their infrastructure — as if they weren't already trying.

The plan further misleads the American public by touting its commitment to provide “\$1.5 trillion in investments.” Yet, the plan actually commits only \$200 billion in federal dollars, a mere 13 percent of the top line number; the rest will be made up, presumably, by contributions from state and local governments and private entities.”

<http://bangordailynews.com/2018/02/14/opinion/contributors/trumps-infrastructure-plan-just-shifts-costs-to-local-taxpayers/>

T4AMERICA BLOG

News, press releases and other updates

“One cannot claim to invest in infrastructure while also cutting it”—T4 statement on President Trump’s infrastructure proposal and 2019 budget request

12 Feb 2018 | Posted by [Transportation for America](#) | [1 Comment](#) | [2019 budget, budget, infrastructure plan, President Trump, Press Releases](#)

Upon the release of the president’s infrastructure plan and his budget request for FY19, T4America Director Kevin F. Thompson offered the following statement:

“One cannot claim to be investing in infrastructure on the one hand while cutting it with the other. The president’s infrastructure plan is merely a shell game, ‘investing’ money that his budget proposes to cut from other vital transportation and infrastructure programs. Taken together, they provide zero new dollars to invest in our country’s pressing infrastructure needs.”

“This proposal makes no progress on the four simple priorities we believe are essential for success. It provides no new money, does nothing to prioritize the smartest projects, and eliminates the programs that are most responsive to local needs. The president’s plan also fails to include any requirements to prioritize repair, even though he stated a clear preference for repair in his remarks this morning.

“The budget signals to local elected officials and taxpayers that they are on their own if they are to invest in transit, penalizing the communities that have already taken the initiative to raise local funding for new or improved transit service. The infrastructure plan gives blank checks out to governors to spend on projects with the greatest political sway—hardly the kind of accountability that taxpayers are clamoring for.

“We’re eager to work with Congress as they begin drafting their own infrastructure plan and setting the budget for the rest of this year and the next, and we hope they’ll follow our four simple principles and advance a national transportation program that invests more real dollars, rewards innovation and local revenue, funds only the smartest new projects, and provides states and localities with a trustworthy federal partner in their efforts.”

<http://t4america.org/2018/02/12/one-cannot-claim-invest-infrastructure-also-cutting-t4-statement-president-trumps-infrastructure-proposal-2019-budget-request/>

T4AMERICA BLOG

News, press releases and other updates

The infrastructure plan that cuts infrastructure funding

13 Feb 2018 | Posted by [Sean Doyle](#) | [0 Comments](#) | [2019 budget](#), [federal funding](#), [fix-it-first](#), [infrastructure](#), [transit funding](#)

After the release of the Trump administration's long awaited [infrastructure plan](#) yesterday (along with their [FY19 budget request](#)), Beth Osborne, vice president of technical assistance at T4America, joined CBC News to talk about some of the issues with the plan in particular.

We have numerous concerns about the infrastructure plan, including the complete lack of any new money, the dismantling of existing, popular programs that fund transit infrastructure or pressing local needs (TIGER and transit capital funding), and the complete lack of any mechanism or requirements to ensure that any money spent will go toward fixing our existing infrastructure first.

"One of the reasons there's a break in trust between the taxpayer and the federal government is that there are only so many times you can come before the taxpayers and say, 'our nation's roads and bridges are crumbling, please give us more money to fix it,' and then not dedicate [the money] to fixing it."

<http://t4america.org/2018/02/12/one-cannot-claim-invest-infrastructure-also-cutting-t4-statement-president-trumps-infrastructure-proposal-2019-budget-request/>

“At Tuesday’s meeting, Murray said...the selectboard had sought a meeting with him to explain their concerns but that the governor declined.”

Portland Press Herald

[LePage scuttled DOT’s settlement with Wiscasset in traffic dispute, attorney says](#)

BY COLIN WOODARD | JAN 14, 2018

The governor rejected a compromise to allow some parking on Main Street, a key concern of local businesses.

Wiscasset officials have rejected a proposed settlement with the state over a controversial traffic project after a lawyer representing the town told them Gov. Paul LePage intervened to strip out a key concession.

The midcoast town of 3,700 has sued the Maine Department of Transportation over its latest effort to mitigate the notorious summertime traffic bottlenecks in its historic village center after the LePage administration [allegedly reneged on key promises and asserted that it did not have to comply with local ordinances](#). In recent weeks, however, the department and town had been negotiating an agreement to settle the dispute.

But Tuesday night the town selectboard rejected the proposed settlement by a 3-2 vote, with several members expressing concern that it did not include any concessions from the state that would allow some on-street parking to remain on Main Street, a key concern of many local business owners. An earlier draft of the settlement had included eight parallel parking spaces on the street, but an attorney for the town said LePage had personally intervened to strip it out.

“The DOT was willing to go along with that, but they are overseen by the governor,” attorney Peter Murray told the selectboard. “Once the commissioner showed the proposed settlement to the governor ... the governor said, ‘No, absolutely not. There won’t be any parking on the street.’”

Largely as a result, the board voted to reject the settlement, in which the department agreed to apply for local permission before demolishing the 1916 Haggett Garage to make way for a new off-street parking lot on a side street, but would proceed with the rest of their traffic project as planned.

“When we talked about having a consent agreement I felt that it would have some resolution on the parking and there was none,” selectman Bob Blagden told the Press Herald on Wednesday morning. “The survival of the businesses and the perception that the town is open for business is at stake.”

LePage’s spokeswoman, Julie Rabinowitz, declined to discuss the governor’s reported intervention, citing the ongoing litigation.

DOT spokesman Ted Talbot also declined to comment. “While we will not comment on the litigation, MaineDOT intends to construct the project based on the concept previously supported by the town, which included the elimination of parking on Main Street,” he said via email.

“It is a common legal tactic to attempt to impoverish an opponent in the legal arena and the state would be certainly doing that with most small towns...”

LePage appears to have taken a personal interest in the project, and has said he’s had enough of the townspeople’s complaints and would like to build a viaduct right over the area. “I have given MDOT full authority to fix this nightmare with or without working with Wiscasset,” LePage wrote a constituent in August. “After 65 years of trying to work with Wiscasset, the time has come to move on.”

At Tuesday’s meeting, Murray said that after LePage blocked the Main Street parking concessions, the selectboard had sought a meeting with him to explain their concerns but that the governor declined.

Wiscasset’s village center – a largely intact complex of 18th- and 19th-century buildings that was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 – is the site of notorious summer traffic jams 2 to 3 miles long on Route 1 on the north and south approaches to the Sheepscot River bridge. The state has been trying to solve the problem for more than half a century.

The state’s latest plan – a \$5 million state-funded project unveiled in the spring of 2016 that promises to improve traffic flow during the worst traffic jams by 12 percent to 14 percent – would make most of its gains by adding two traffic lights and “bump out” pedestrian crossing waiting areas in the village. The controversial part is the elimination of on-street parking on Main Street – currently 23 spaces – and parts of key side streets – measures that the state’s studies say account for just 2 percent to 4 percent of flow improvement.

Residents and the selectboard initially supported the plan nonetheless, but majorities of both now oppose it because they say the state has not upheld its end of the bargain and has broken key promises. In June 2017, residents revoked their support in a town referendum after the state reneged on commitments to use federal funding and thus abide by the associated historic preservation and environmental reviews and requirements that come with it, and to not take any properties by eminent domain.

The town’s suit, filed Nov. 28, was prompted by the state’s imminent plan to demolish the Haggett Garage, which it had purchased by invoking eminent domain in order to create off-street replacement parking.

Ralph H. Doering III, whose family owns several 19th-century commercial buildings on and near Main Street in the historic village center, in January [offered to pay the cash-strapped town’s legal costs](#) to continue its legal action against the department, and a group of citizens calling themselves Citizens for Sensible Solutions on Monday also pledged to raise funds.

At Tuesday’s meeting, the selectboard voted unanimously to put the question of whether to accept such donations before town residents. A special town meeting will be held this month for that purpose, though the date as not been set.

“It is a common legal tactic to attempt to impoverish an opponent in the legal arena and the state would be certainly doing that with most small towns,” said retired resident Bill Sutter, a 30-year veteran of the DOT who opposes the project and attended Tuesday’s meeting. “I’d like to see the town approve accepting donations.”

The state Business and Consumer court in Portland has a hearing scheduled on the case at the end of March.

Abigail W. Adams | Lincoln County News | BDN | Charlotte Boynton, Lincoln County News • February 14, 2018 4:24 pm

WISCASSET, Maine — The Wiscasset Board of Selectmen on Tuesday rejected a consent judgment negotiated by attorneys for the town and the Maine Department of Transportation to resolve [the town's lawsuit against the MDOT](#).

The consent agreement was not well-received by a majority of those present at the special selectmen's meeting at the Wiscasset Community Center.

According to attorneys Peter Murray and John Shumadine, representing the town, under the agreement the MDOT would comply with the Wiscasset Historic Preservation Ordinance and submit an application to the Wiscasset Historic Preservation Commission for a certificate of appropriateness for demolition of the historic Haggett's Garage.

If the commission denied the application, the MDOT would appeal to the town's board of appeals. If that board denied the application, the DOT would exclude demolition of the building and the construction of a parking lot on the site from the project and move forward with the rest of the proposed project.

According to Murray, the MDOT had agreed to provide eight parallel parking spaces on Main Street — a chief concern of critics of the project — but when MDOT Commissioner David Bernhardt presented the proposal to Gov. Paul LePage, the governor vetoed the eight parking spaces.

Murray said he requested a meeting with the governor, but was told the governor would not entertain such a meeting with litigation pending. If the town accepted the consent agreement, the governor might meet with representatives of the town, Murray said.

Shumadine said that under the consent agreement, the MDOT would pay for installation of traffic lights included in the project, and maintain the lights and pay the electricity bills for the lights. The MDOT would also maintain and pay the cost of electricity for the traffic light at the intersection of Route 1 and Route 27.

A motion by chairwoman Judy Colby to authorize Murray and Shumadine to execute the proposed consent agreement was seconded by Selectman Benjamin Rines.

But members of the public were less receptive, and most encouraged selectmen to move forward with the lawsuit.

James Kochan suggested selectmen table the motion and take more time to study it.

William Sutter suggested that voters should decide whether to approve the consent judgment, and asked what the alternative would be if the town rejected the judgment.

Murray said the town could proceed with litigation for an injunction against the MDOT project, but cautioned,. “It would be a long battle with no guarantee of the outcome.”

“We need to step back,” Pam Logan said. “We are getting nothing ... We need to have a voice.”

Seaver Leslie said the eight parking spaces had been agreed on over a year ago and are now gone. “They are taking away the life blood of this community,” he said.

Dick Zieg spoke in favor of the project, noting, “We are only part of Lincoln County. They are trying to help the whole state. We need to move forward in the 21st century.”

Former Selectman Judy Flanagan said, “I want you to know you are not the only person here that feels that way.”

Selectman Robert Blagden expressed disappointment in the consent agreement, which he said would give the town next to nothing with little to no compromise.

Rines mentioned a proposed \$75,000 donation from the Doering family to continue the legal battle, and suggested the town vote on moving forward with litigation.

Selectman Judy Colby said she didn’t feel the town should accept a donation from someone who named the town in a separate lawsuit.

Murray said that while it is not illegal for the town to accept private donations, when the donor has an interest in the outcome of the litigation, it creates concern.

The board voted against moving forward with the consent agreement, with Colby and Selectman Jeff Slack in the minority.

After the vote, Rines moved to hold a special town meeting and ask the voters whether the town should accept any and all donations for the purpose of litigation. The motion carried, 5-0.

Murray advised the selectmen to hold the town meeting as soon as possible.



FEBRUARY 15, 2018

Our View: Low gas tax, not electric cars, causing shortfall in Maine highway fund

If today's drivers contributed as much as their grandparents, there would be no problem.

Maine has a free-rider problem when it comes to infrastructure, but it's not the one they are talking about in Augusta.

Gov. LePage and his allies in the Legislature want to charge an annual fee to the owners of electric and hybrid vehicles because they don't pay as much in the taxes that fund maintenance and repairs of the state's road system.

But the proposed bill, [L.D. 1806](#), is an inadequate response to a much bigger problem, which is that nobody is paying their fair share. Gas tax rates have not kept up with either inflation or our needs, leaving the state with more roads than their users are willing to support.

LePage's swipe at a few hundred electric vehicle owners might look like a step in the right direction, but it's such a small step that it's useless, and just delays constructive discussion on how to pay for a 21st-century transportation system.

Maine will likely have another nine-digit shortfall in its highway fund this year, with an estimated [\\$159 million less](#) in receipts from fuel and excise taxes than is needed to keep roads and bridges safe for travel.

We will also probably be asked to approve another bond on Election Day [and again in 2019 per current MaineDOT Work Plan], as we did in [2017](#), [2016](#) and 2015 to supplement the inadequate income from the dedicated taxes.

Borrowing money for ongoing expenses is a recipe for fiscal disaster. The state needs to generate more revenue to maintain the road system that we already have, and save the bonds for new projects.

The increasing popularity of electric and hybrid vehicles are a part of the problem – but a tiny part, for now. There are 19,000 hybrids registered in Maine and 410 all-electrics. If they were all charged the fees that LePage proposes (\$150 a year for hybrids, \$250 for plug-in electrics), the state would take in an estimated \$2.9 million, not even making a dent in the shortfall.

Electric vehicle owners aren't the only ones who avoid the tax. High-mileage gas vehicles are also paying less tax per mile and that disparity will grow every year as older cars go off the road and are replaced with more efficient models.

But by far the biggest problem is not fuel efficiency, it is the fact that no one seems to think that they should have to pay the real cost of maintaining the transportation system.

The federal gas tax is [18.4 cents](#), where it has been since 1993. Maine's gas tax is 30 cents (31 for diesel) and has not been increased since 2011. Both are a fraction of what they were at the time when most of the roads and bridges that we use were built.

When the federal Highway Trust Fund was created in [1956](#) to build the Interstate Highway System, the federal gas tax was only 3 cents a gallon. In 1959 it was bumped up to 4 cents and if it had risen with inflation it would be 34 cents today. Instead, it's been stuck at less than half that for the last 25 years.

In 1932 Maine voters turned down [a referendum](#) that would have increased the gas tax from 5 cents a gallon to 6 cents. In today's money, 5 cents would be 87 cents and 6 cents would be \$1.04. The current rate is one third of what it would have been if it had kept up with inflation.

If people who use the roads of Maine – residents, tourists and commercial drivers – would contribute to road maintenance with the same effort that their grandparents made, there would not be any shortfall in the highway fund. But because we all want someone else to pay, the problem just keeps getting worse.

Rep. Andrew McLean, D-Gorham, House chairman of the Transportation Committee, proposed a bill last year that would take a more balanced approach. It would introduce a fee for electric vehicles, but it would also raise the gas tax by 7 cents. That really would be a step in the right direction.

The real problem, for Maine and the country as a whole, is that the system of taxes and fees that built the road system in the 20th century no longer generates enough revenue to maintain them. We should be talking about the future and designing a system that will work.

[Click here to access this Portland Press Herald Editorial.](#)

How does Trump's new proposal affect the DOT Work Plan and all future projects such as the I-395/Route 9 Connector?

“In November 2017, Maine voters approved a \$100 million General Obligation (G.O.) bond to fund the state transportation program in 2018. Based on voter approval of transportation bond referenda in recent years, this Work Plan also assumes Governor, Legislative and voter approval for \$100 million in G.O. bonding in CY 2019 and \$100 million again in CY 2020.” [MaineDOT 2018-2020 Work Plan](#)

\$100 million G.O. Bond approved in November 2017 for CY 2018:

Maine Citizen's Guide to the

Referendum Election

Tuesday, November 7, 2017



Intent and Content

Prepared by the Office of the Attorney General

This Act would authorize the State to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed one hundred and five million dollars (\$105,000,000), to raise funds for a variety of projects as described below. The bonds would run for a period not longer than 10 years from the date of issue and would be backed by the full faith and credit of the State.

One hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) in proceeds from the sale of these bonds would be administered by the **Department of Transportation** for the following purposes:

Highways, secondary roads and bridges – eighty million dollars (\$80,000,000) would be expended to:

- construct, reconstruct or rehabilitate state highways that have been designated as Priority 1, 2 or 3 by the Department of Transportation in accordance with state statute (23 M.R.S. § 73(7));
- repair secondary roads in partnership with municipalities pursuant to the existing Municipal Partnership Initiative program; and
- replace and rehabilitate bridges.

Highway and bridge projects are matched with federal funds on a ratio of 1.1 to 1 (federal to state) dollars.

Municipalities are required to contribute 50% or more of the project costs under the Municipal Partnership Initiative program, which is described on the Department's web site at <http://maine.gov/mdot/planning/>. Highway and bridge projects are matched with federal funds on a ratio of 1.1 to 1 (federal to state) dollars. Accordingly, these bond proceeds are expected to leverage approximately eighty-eight million dollars (\$88,000,000) in federal and local matching funds.

<http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/citizensguide2017.pdf>

- CY2018 Bond—\$80 million “matched with [\$88 million] federal funds on a ratio of 1.1/1 (federal to state) dollars.” Trump’s proposal could greatly reduce the highway and bridges federal matching funds for the CY 2019 and the CY 2020 G.O. bonds, resulting in a significant shortfall in the DOT 2018-2020 Work Plan. It’s currently unknown what that new ratio may be.
- If Trump’s grant proposal is enacted, the traditional 80% (\$48.8 million) federal obligation for the I-395/Route 9 connector’s \$61 million cost, will diminish to 20% (\$12.2 million); the state will be compelled to obligate an additional \$36.6 million (\$48.8 million total) to complete the project.



Without funding, Trump's infrastructure plan is a road to nowhere

The Trump administration has lot of ideas for infrastructure improvements, but little in the way of ideas to pay for it.

EDITORIALS 38 mins ago

February 15, 2018

President Donald Trump promised Americans “gleaming new roads” and the “modern infrastructure our economy needs and our people deserve.” And he’d do it all quickly by shortcutting environmental regulations and reviews. It turns out this happy future was just a hollow promise.

The Trump administration has lot of ideas for infrastructure improvements, but little in the way of ideas to pay for it. So, the president is [passing the buck to state and local governments](#). Want cleaner drinking water, less congested roadways, more public transit routes? Guess what? You can figure out how to pay for it.

If any entity has less ability to pay for roads, bridges and airports than the federal government, it is state governments. That’s why for decades, federal funding has been used as a carrot to encourage more local investment. Maine’s latest \$105 million transportation bond, for example, was matched with about \$137 million in federal and other funds.

In Maine, combined state and federal funding falls short of meeting transportation goals set in state statute by [\\$59 million per year](#).

Due to this lack of transportation funding, Maine is not on track to meet a 2012 law’s timetable to improve the state’s roads, according to [a 2016 Department of Transportation report](#). The department relies heavily on quick repair jobs rather than more expensive rehabilitation projects.

As a result, Mainers spend an extra \$385 per year, on average, on vehicle maintenance because of the poor condition of the state’s

roads, according to the [latest assessment](#) from the American Society of Civil Engineers. The group rated 40 percent of the state's roads as being in fair to unacceptable conditions and nearly 15 percent of the state's bridges as structurally deficient, much higher than the New England and U.S. averages.

More than 19 percent of the state's bridges are [functionally obsolete](#), and 18 percent of state highway miles are rated [poor or unacceptable](#).

This shortfall is the reason state lawmakers are [considering an unpopular fee](#) on hybrid and electric vehicles to raise money for road work. Another bill proposes raising the state's gas tax to raise revenue for transportation work.

Expecting states to come up with more money for infrastructure projects is sheer fantasy.

Nationally, the backlog highway and bridge work totals \$836 billion, according to [an assessment](#) done by the American Society of Civil Engineers last year. Most of that work is deferred maintenance and repair. The group gave the country an overall [grade of D+](#) for the condition of our infrastructure.

Federal fuel taxes are a major source of federal highway and bridge funding. Because the taxes have not been raised since 1994, the buying power of the national Highway Trust Fund has dropped by 40 percent.

Without a significant increase in fuel taxes, which Trump said [he supported](#) last May, or a dedicated source of federal revenue, the president's infrastructure plan is likely to remain a work of fiction.

Follow [BDN Editorial & Opinion on Facebook](#) for the latest opinions on the issues of the day in Maine.

[Click here to view this BDN Editorial with working hyperlinks.](#)



Trump budget proposes 13 percent cut to Transportation Dept

BY REBECCA SAVRANSKY AND MELANIE ZANONA -03/16/17 08:29 AM EDT (EXCERPT OF ORIGINAL ARTICLE)

The **Department of Transportation** (DOT) **faces a \$2.4 billion cut under President Trump's proposed federal budget blueprint — a surprising figure given Trump's pledges to improve U.S. infrastructure.**

The department's **funding would be cut by 13 percent**, to \$16.2 billion, according to the proposal released early Thursday.

The budget limits funding for the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment program, **eliminates funding for the Essential Air Service program** and **ends federal support for long-distance Amtrak trains.**

The blueprint also **eliminates funding for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program**, which was set up by the Obama administration's 2009 economic stimulus package to provide an extra injection of cash for surface transportation projects.

The grants are appropriated by Congress every year but were never authorized. The proposal estimates that scrapping the program would save \$499 million annually.

TIGER grants are a popular funding tool among cities and states. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao expressed support for TIGER grants and the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan program during her confirmation hearing.

But the program has drawn the ire of Republicans, who have sought to eliminate or reduce the grants in previous spending bills.

“If [TIGER grants] were to be cut, then it's big time trouble,” Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), ranking member on the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, told The Hill last week. “Department of Transportation TIGER grants are something that are considered essential to rehabbing our infrastructure.”

Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), who chairs the Senate Appropriations transportation subcommittee, has promised to protect the [TIGER] grants in any spending bill.

By Charlotte Boynton, Lincoln County News

February 21, 2018

Wiscasset voters will decide whether to move forward with the town's lawsuit against the Maine Department of Transportation in a referendum.

The meeting room at the Wiscasset municipal building was nearly at capacity for the Wiscasset Board of Selectmen's meeting Tuesday. During the meeting, Selectwoman Judy Colby made a plea for a referendum vote instead of an open town meeting.

The town's lawsuit against the Department of Transportation concerns its downtown project known as Option 2. The project includes the demolition of Haggett's Garage and the elimination of parking on Main Street.

"I was reminded at the selectmen's meeting the other night that we, as a board, work for all the people, not just a select few," Colby said. "I believe it is time for us to step back, have a referendum ballot vote instead of an open town meeting, and ask the voters if they want to move forward with the lawsuit. The people need to have their voices heard."

Colby said the Maine Business and Consumer Court has extended the time for a hearing on a preliminary injunction against the Department of Transportation to April 9, which will allow enough time for a townwide referendum.

After Colby's remarks, she made a motion for a referendum to loud applause from several members of the public. The motion carried 5-0.

Selectmen and several members of the public spoke in favor of the motion. There were no comments against the motion.

The discussion included the importance of the wording of the referendum question. The consensus was that the wording should be simple and straightforward.

Town Manager Marian Anderson gave an update on the town's legal issues. The town will not file a brief in a lawsuit by a downtown property owner against the department that names the town as a party of interest.

Anderson said the legal documents from the town's suit against the department are available on the town website for the public to review.

Just \$5.00 can provide [public funds](#) for local state representation:

Qualifying Contributions

In order to qualify for public funds under the Maine Clean Election Act, a candidate must demonstrate a threshold amount of community support by collecting a minimum number of checks or money orders of \$5 or more made payable to the Maine Clean Election Fund. For legislative candidates, the contributions must be made by registered voters in the candidate's district.

To make a contribution online, click [here](#). Thank you!

Required Amounts for Certification

Candidates must collect a minimum number of valid qualifying contributions to be eligible for the Maine Clean Election Act program:

- 60 qualifying contributions for House candidates
- 175 qualifying contributions for Senate candidates

Candidates for the Legislature must submit their qualifying contributions and the accompanying receipt & acknowledgement forms to the Commission by 5:00 p.m. on April 20th. Candidates are encouraged to collect more than the minimum number of qualifying contributions in case some cannot be counted as valid.

Optional Supplemental Payments for the General Election

General election candidates (in contested races only) may request up to eight [supplemental payments](#) of MCEA funds by continuing to collect qualifying contributions and submitting them to the Commission by 5:00 p.m. on October 16, 2018.

- For every 15 valid qualifying contributions collected by a House candidate, the Commission will make a supplemental payment of \$1,275.
- For every 45 valid qualifying contributions collected by a Senate candidate, the Commission will make a supplemental payment of \$5,075.

Bev Uhlenhake is running for State Senate District #08 encompassing Bradley, BREWER, Bucksport, Burlington, Castine, Clifton, Dedham, East Central Penobscot Unorganized Territory, EDDINGTON, Great Pond, HOLDEN, Lincoln, Lowell, Northwest Hancock Unorganized Territory, T32 MD Township, Orland, Orrington, Penobscot, Verona Island, and part of East Hancock Unorganized Territory. Bev has served our community as a member of several boards, as a Councilor since 2013, and as Brewer's Mayor in 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/BevforMaine/>

Arthur Verow is seeking reelection in House District #128 that includes most of Brewer. Archie has served our community for a majority of his adult life, retiring as City Clerk to serving on the City Council, to Mayor, and to State Representative from 2012 to 2016.

Politics and personal/business agendas should have never made their way into this project, yet they did and our current representation at the state level does not serve our community's best interests—it's time to send those people home and replace them with people that will listen to our concerns. Please support Bev Uhlenhake and Archie Verow by submitting a valid qualifying \$5.00 dollar contribution to the MCEA in their name.

[Panel opposes new fees on hybrid, electric cars](#) By PETER MCGUIRE Staff Writer

Democrats reject a LePage administration proposal to make the vehicles more expensive to own in Maine.

The rejected bill would have imposed annual surcharges of \$150 for hybrid gas-electric cars and \$250 for all-electric cars.

Democratic lawmakers rejected a proposal from Gov. Paul LePage's administration to make owning hybrid and electric cars more expensive in a committee-level vote Thursday. The 6-5 vote of the transportation committee fell along party lines, with Republican lawmakers opposing the panel's recommendation to the full Legislature that the bill should not pass.

The bill would have imposed annual surcharges of \$150 for hybrid gas-electric cars and \$250 for all-electric cars to offset the state's loss of fuel tax from those vehicles and help overcome a chronic multimillion-dollar highway fund shortfall. Angry owners of electric and hybrid cars who swarmed the transportation committee last week fumed against the bill as shortsighted and arbitrary.

Rep. Andrew McLean, D-Gorham co-chairman of the committee, said he couldn't support the measure because it focuses only on fees for select vehicles, not other ways to raise revenue such as raising the fuel tax and other fees. **"If people were really interested in doing something significant around transportation funding there would be some give-and-take," McLean said. "Unfortunately, I feel we are not seeing that from the administration."**

McLean floated a bill last year that would raise highway funds by adding fees on hybrids and electric vehicles, increase the gas tax, reallocate some state sales tax and increase vehicle registration fees. The committee voted to table that bill Thursday.

Maine has an annual \$159 million funding shortfall for roads and bridges, which the state has offset by borrowing hundreds of millions in recent years.

"A lot of good bills make almost everyone unhappy and I think that is going to be the measure of success for a funding package," McLean said.

Without the recommendation of the transportation committee, the bill is unlikely to win passage in the House and Senate. Department of Transportation Commissioner David Bernhardt told lawmakers that the administration tried a standalone vehicle fee bill after a package of changes failed in committee last year. A department proposal this session to devote 12 percent of vehicle and parts sales taxes to the highway fund was voted down in the taxation committee, he said.

A comprehensive highway funding bill could take years of groundwork to successfully pass, he said. LePage will not consider raising the gas tax, taking that option off the table. "For one thing, you can't have a comprehensive package unless you talk about gas tax, and we all know where the administration sits on that," Bernhardt said. Maine's 30 cent per-gallon gas tax hasn't increased since 2011, after lawmakers stopped automatic annual increases pegged to the inflation rate.

If the tax had remained indexed to inflation, it would now be 33.6 cents per gallon and generate up to \$25 million more a year, according to a committee analyst.

Proposed fees on electric and hybrid cars would raise roughly \$2.95 million in 2020, according to the committee analyst. There are 19,000 hybrids and 450 electric cars registered in Maine, roughly 3 percent of passenger vehicles registered in the state, according to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

While potential fee revenue is tiny compared to the highway fund deficit, the state should do something now, since electric and hybrid cars will become more popular in the future, said Rep. Wayne Parry, R-Arundel, who sponsored the bill, L.D. 1806.

"We really need to try to put something in, even if it raises very little money," Parry said. "We hear an awful lot in this building about people paying their fair share and we have a group of people paying none." Eighteen states have fees on electric or hybrid vehicles, but the fees proposed in the bill would be the most expensive in the country. Twenty-three states, including Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, provide financial incentives to lower the price of hybrid or electric cars, according to the National Conference on State Legislatures.

Parry acknowledged the proposed fees in his bill were high. In a minority report, he recommended annual fees of \$50 for hybrids and \$150 for electric vehicles, equal to what the average Maine driver pays in gas tax every year.

Joint Standing Committee Transportation keeps spinning its wheels:

February 2018:

Maine has an annual \$159 million funding shortfall for roads and bridges, which the state has offset by borrowing hundreds of millions in recent years.

“If people were really interested in doing something significant around transportation funding there would be some give-and-take,” McLean said. “Unfortunately, I feel we are not seeing that from the administration.” Rep. Andrew McLean

McLean floated a bill last year that would raise highway funds by adding fees on hybrids and electric vehicles, increase the gas tax, reallocate some state sales tax and increase vehicle registration fees. **The committee voted to table that bill** Thursday. (Portland Press Herald 2.23.18)

Revised: 02/11/15 *AMC*



127th MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 47

LR 188(01)

Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Remove One of the Proposed Routes from Consideration for the Interstate 395 and Route 9 Connector

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement for Original Bill

Sponsor: Rep. Verow of Brewer

Committee: Transportation

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement

Potential current biennium revenue decrease - Federal Expenditure Funds

Fiscal Detail and Notes

If this bill is enacted, the Department of Transportation (DOT) may be required to reimburse the federal government for the \$2,205,277 in federal funds spent on the project. This repayment would be accomplished by reducing monthly reimbursements from the federal government for other authorized projects. DOT may then be able to re-obligate this funding to another federally approved project as long as the re-obligation occurs within the same federal fiscal year. The result would be an extended period of time for the \$2.2 million to be reimbursed to the Highway Fund.

February 2015:

In February 2015, LD47 was soundly defeated by a vote of 9 to 1. The DOT threatened, without material fact, that the state “may be required” to reimburse the \$2,205,277 spent on the study.

Today, even when facing an annual \$159 million shortfall for roads and bridges, the JSC Transportation tables a funding bill that was already tabled in 2017...

JSC Transportation, with many of the same members as today, voted in 2015 to squander \$61 million to save \$2.2 million after the DOT made veiled threats of a reimbursement possibility during LD47 testimony. Note that, the Wiscasset Study required no such reimbursement when cancelled at the end of the study in 2011.

DOT’s core argument against 2B-2 was money driven, illogical and fiscally irresponsible. Their argument was presented without facts—only a mere possibility...



[Local officials, business owners say Trump's infrastructure plan leaves rural Maine behind](#)

Municipal leaders and small business owners in Maine fear that state government, local towns, and middle and low-income taxpayers will end up shouldering the bulk of the financial burden of President Donald Trump's \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan, which was unveiled in detail on Monday.

At a roundtable discussion in Bangor on Thursday, municipal officials and small business owners discussed their concerns with the proposal, particularly the fact that it requires state and local governments to match all federal spending by at least a four-to-one ratio.

"The president's bill appears to take the current funding process we have and flip it on its head," said Bev Uhlenhake of the Brewer City Council, noting that the federal government is only expected to pay \$200 billion, or 13 percent, towards the total improvements. The bulk of the funds for transportation, utility and communications projects across the nation are expected to come from state and local governments as well as private investment.

"That will make the infrastructure improvements we need nearly impossible," Uhlenhake continued. "Our communities that have the biggest need for improvement will have the least ability to do it."

The Maine Small Business Coalition, which sponsored the talk, further noted that lower- and middle-income taxpayers "already pay the highest effective tax rate of all Mainers," and will likely have to "pay even more than their fair share of the costs of improvements."

Gale White, owner of Lubec Brewing Company, expressed concern that rural towns won't be able to shoulder the cost to maintain federal roads and bridges. "My town and my business depend on tourism and trade across the border with Canada," White said. "U.S. Route 1 and the international bridge are federal throughways that benefit all Americans. Our town of just over 1,000 can't afford to maintain these roads and bridges. All Americans should." White and others said they were disappointed that Rep. Bruce Poliquin has expressed support for the proposal.

The White House plan also paves the way for governments that can't afford to pay for the bulk of the repairs to sell public assets, such as bridges and water systems, to private entities. And environmental groups were quick to criticize Trump's proposal to streamline the project permitting process, which they said would decimate environmental protections.

At the forum, Orono Town Council member Laurie Osher, who also owns energy efficiency firm Osher Environment Systems, noted that the president's budget, also unveiled this week, includes major cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

"All of these government agencies are essential to improving our infrastructure while also protecting the environment and workers," Osher said. "The proposal to build infrastructure by using private funding sources leveraged with public funds without the oversight and guidance of these science-based agencies is a recipe for only meeting the goals of the very rich."

The infrastructure plan is the latest policy released by the Trump administration that is designed to benefit corporations, with costs falling to middle and low-income taxpayers. The recent Republican tax overhaul slashed taxes for wealthy individuals and profitable companies while ballooning the deficit and likely leading to cuts to health care and other vital services for Maine families.

Rep. Andrew McLean, D-Gorham, is the House chair of the JSC on Transportation.

There is nothing more fundamental than the work the government does to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Our transportation network of roads, bridges, airports, rail lines, seaports and bike and pedestrian facilities is critical to the success of our economy. But in the last 20 years, we have seen a decline in the investment we make in our transportation infrastructure, and it has already had a detrimental effect on our state.

During times of great peril and when our country had significantly fewer means than we do now, we invested in our infrastructure. During the Civil War, we built the Transcontinental Railroad. During the Great Depression, we built the Hoover Dam, and right after World War II, we constructed our Interstate Highway System. We made these collective investments because we knew they were a down payment on our future. We saw opportunity in coming together to build things that would improve the lives of the average person. These were—and continue to be—monuments dedicated to our collective will and vision.

While previous generations constructed these engineering marvels, over the last few years we have not even been able to find the funding to meet our state's basic transportation needs.

Because of declining revenues and the increasing cost of maintaining deteriorating roads and bridges, the Maine Department of Transportation has estimated we need another \$160 million every single year just to keep up with basic maintenance. Every year we let that deficit grow, we incur more risk and lost opportunities.

Damage to our vehicles from bad roads, traffic congestion, pedestrian and driver safety, businesses that don't have easy access to market, and more cost our economy [millions of dollars every year](#).

There's no way around it. It's going to cost money to fix this problem, and there will be growing pains until we get there. The only way to succeed in building a long-lasting statewide infrastructure is by ensuring everyone—truck drivers, green car owners, consumers and communities—has equal stakes in the outcome.

This session I have a bill, [LD 1149](#), that combines Republican and Democratic proposals to fund improvements in Maine's infrastructure by raising revenue from four sources, including gas sales, motor vehicle and green vehicle registrations and the sales tax.

Gas prices are [the lowest they've been in over a decade](#), and yet the gas tax has not increased. Some motor vehicle registration fees have not been raised since the 1970s and actually cost the state money. Owners of hybrid and electric cars pay much less or no fuel tax at all while still using our roads and bridges. My bill is a starting point. There are many other ideas that could be viable options for raising revenue to pay for a long-term plan to improve Maine's roads and bridges. Anyone who drives on our roads understands the need is great. But the time is right, as well.

The Department of Transportation has earned our trust by completing projects in an efficient and timely manner. The money we pay in fuel tax all goes to fix roads and bridges. The department has used new design and finance techniques to stretch the dollar further than ever. It has organized its planning and construction of projects based on need and economic importance through its annual work plan. And, lastly, the implementation of the statutory goals set out a framework in Maine law for the progress that is needed on our roads and bridges. When asking the public for further investment, we have to ensure those dollars are being spent efficiently. In my view, the Department of Transportation has earned the public's trust.

This issue is not just important to people who sit on the left or right side of the political spectrum. It doesn't matter if we come from Kittery or Madawaska. We don't drive on Democratic roads or Republican roads — we drive on Maine roads. Solving this problem is too important to let partisanship or narrow interests get in the way. Now more than ever, we need an honest and constructive conversation on how to fix our transportation infrastructure. And, frankly, there couldn't be a better time.

Without a solution, we will continue to tread water, falling further and further behind every year. Our economy is counting on bold and innovative leadership on this issue. My bill and these ideas begin that conversation.

LD 1149 was not acted upon last year and was just tabled, again. The unwillingness to discuss how to raise ourselves out of a \$160 million hole every single year by the JSC Transportation—and—the DOT's willingness to squander away \$61 million on 2B-2, a controversial project that does not meet purpose and needs, is both fiscally irresponsible and shortsighted.



Building a Stronger America: Rural Communities Need Reliable, Modern Infrastructure

[INFRASTRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY](#) | Issued on: February 21, 2018

“No longer will we allow the infrastructure of our magnificent country to crumble and decay.”

President Donald J. Trump

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS IN NEED OF REPAIR: Infrastructure systems across rural America have fallen into a state of disrepair, holding back rural communities.

- More than a third of all major rural roads in the United States were in poor or mediocre condition in 2015 according to a report by TRIP, a national transportation research organization.
 - 15 percent of major rural roads were rated in poor condition.
 - 21 percent of major rural roads were rated in mediocre condition.
 - 14 states had 20 percent or more of their major rural roads rated in poor condition, with some states having around 40 percent in poor condition.
- Ten percent of all rural bridges were rated as “structurally deficient” in 2016, according to TRIP.

http://www.tripnet.org/docs/Rural_Roads_The_White_House_Briefing_02-21-2018.pdf

*The above numbers are national averages and as usual Maine is worse than average!!!

- **19% of Maine’s major rural roads are in poor condition.** (TRIP)
- **20% of Maine’s major rural roads are in mediocre condition.** (TRIP)
- **14.4% of Maine’s bridges are structurally deficient.** (2016 FHWA data)
- **19.3% of Maine’s bridges are functionally obsolete.** (2015 FHWA data)
- **Driving on roads needing repair, costs Mainers \$469 million/ year in vehicle repairs and \$460 in operating costs per motorist.** (TRIP)

Remember these unmet transportation needs when the DOT opts to spend \$61 million on a project that doesn’t meet purpose and needs.

(CNN)For the past decade or so, Americans have been inundated with propaganda about our crumbling infrastructure. According to this narrative, our roads and bridges are falling apart and the only solution is more federal spending.

Earlier this month, the White House released President Donald Trump's long-awaited [infrastructure program](#), which promises to spend [\\$1.5 trillion -- \\$200 billion from the federal government](#) -- on several new infrastructure programs on top of what governments already spend.

So how much of this money is dedicated to maintaining and restoring crumbling infrastructure? Zero; nada; not one red, white, and blue cent.

The White House says that, unlike some federal programs that are solely dedicated to new construction, the Trump plan allows state and local politicians to decide to spend their share of the funds on either new projects or maintenance. But the plan doesn't guarantee that any of the money will be spent on maintenance.

Where infrastructure is in bad shape, it is because [politicians are allowed to decide how to spend infrastructure funds](#). And, as I have argued elsewhere, [some decide to build highly visible new projects rather than maintain existing ones](#).

That is why Virginia is funding construction of the [Silver Line](#) and Maryland the [Purple Line](#) rather than [rehabilitating the Washington Metro system](#). That is why New York City is building what the New York Times calls the "[most expensive subway in the world](#)" -- a 3.5-mile line between Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal -- rather than rehabilitate its [declining subway system](#). That is why Boston is building a [\\$2.3 billion, 4.3 mile light rail extension](#) to Medford rather than spend the money rehabilitating its [creaky rail system](#).

Although the Trump plan would allow states to spend their share of new infrastructure funds on maintenance, it leaves the decision in the hands of local politicians. They will almost always go for the glitz rather than the routine.

To be fair, the nation's infrastructure isn't in as bad shape as often claimed. We haven't seen a bridge fail due to poor maintenance [since 1989](#), and since then the states have [reduced the number of structurally deficient bridges by 60%](#). The Minneapolis bridge that collapsed in 2007, for example, was found to [have failed due to a design flaw](#) that no amount of maintenance could have prevented. Most states and cities are also filling potholes, and the [average roughness of most roads has steadily declined for the last two decades](#).

In general, our state highways, which are funded mainly out of gas taxes, tolls, and other user fees, are in good shape, while local roads, which are funded mainly out of property taxes and sales taxes, are not. Our freight railroads, which are funded mainly through user fees, are in good shape, while Amtrak and urban transit infrastructure that are funded exclusively by tax dollars are not.

Notice a pattern here? Infrastructure that is funded by user fees tends to be in good shape because managers know people will pay less if the infrastructure declines. [Infrastructure that is funded by tax dollars is in poor shape because politicians would rather spend money on the next shiny new project than take care of the old ones.](#)

The other advantage of user fees is that they tell us whether new infrastructure is needed. If users are willing to pay for more infrastructure, then it is something we really need that will produce secondary economic benefits. If they aren't willing to pay for it, we probably don't need it and maintaining it will merely be a drag on the economy.

To its credit, the Trump infrastructure plan does allow for some additional user fees. For example, it would allow the states to charge tolls for more interstate highways. This would not only help pay for maintenance and improvements of those highways but [relieve congestion, saving Americans billions of dollars a year](#). But the plan leaves the decision to state politicians, who are unlikely to ask voters to pay tolls when they can pretend to give them something for nothing.

In general, however, [not one of the new programs proposed by the Trump infrastructure plan is dedicated solely to maintenance and rehabilitation of crumbling infrastructure](#). As a result, [it is likely that the bulk of this proposed new federal spending will go toward new infrastructure that we may not really need and can't afford to maintain](#).

CNN says what I've been saying since January 2012:

“The White House says that, unlike some federal programs that are solely dedicated to new construction, the Trump plan allows state and local politicians to decide to spend their share of the funds on either new projects or maintenance. But the plan doesn't guarantee that any of the money will be spent on maintenance.

So how much of this money is dedicated to maintaining and restoring crumbling infrastructure? Zero; nada; not one red, white, and blue cent.”

“...in the hands of local politicians. They will almost always go for the glitz rather than the routine.”

“...it is likely that the bulk of this proposed new federal spending will go toward new infrastructure that we may not really need and can't afford to maintain.”

Fact is, fixing roads and bridges isn't sexy enough for our politicians. The DOT would rather spend our money on that new shiny thing that gets them the spotlight at the next ribbon cutting. Why else would they squander \$61 million when our roads and bridges are in such dire disrepair??

[10 US states most in need of Trump's \\$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan](#)

If a Mainer tells you, "You can't get there from here," he may really mean it.

(CNBC 1.31.18)

A ranking of 48th is something to be real proud about!! Let's waste \$61 million on 2B-2; that should ensure that we keep our worthy ranking...

If there is one thing Americans can agree on these days, it is that our infrastructure is a mess. In his first State of the Union address on Tuesday, President Donald Trump focused on the issue. He called for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill to help rebuild our nation's crumbling infrastructure. To fund the plan, Trump said all federal appropriations should be "leveraged by partnering with state and local governments and, where appropriate, tapping into private-sector investment."

Noting America "is a nation of builders," he stressed the importance of revamping roads, highways, bridges, airports and the like. But so far, the administration has sketched only a broad outline. Congress is waiting for a formal written proposal.

Meanwhile, the states are hanging on every development, and our annual [America's Top States for Business](#) study finds some need more help than others. Our Infrastructure category, worth 400 of our 2,500 total points, uses [government data](#) to grade the roads, bridges, ports, airports, rail systems and utilities in all 50 states. These are the states that we find need the most work.

3. Maine

The state is finally replacing the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge, which carries Interstate 95 between Kittery, Maine; and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, but not before the 77-year-old lift bridge became stuck several times — in the up position, the down position and various positions in between. The bridge is just one of many infrastructure issues plaguing [Maine](#), the Pine Tree State. Roads and bridges by and large are in poor condition; the availability of air travel is limited; there is little rail service to speak of. If a Mainer tells you, "You can't get there from here," he may really mean it.

2017 Infrastructure score: 108 out of 400 points [ranked 48th in 2016 and 2017]

Roads in mediocre or poor condition: 53 percent

Deficient bridges: 14.4 percent

Average commute to work: 23.6 minutes

20-year water system needs: \$1.2 billion

Posted 4:00 AM | February 28, 2018

Letter to the editor: Extra annual fee on electric cars is wrong way to fund highway repairs

The governor's [effort to tax electric cars](#) avoids real solutions, attacks a growing industry and causes greater divisions within an already fractured government.

I reduced my toll on the Earth by 40 percent through driving electric vehicles. The purchase price was higher, but as with all technology, prices drop and ranges improve. We hope they are the future, but currently, they're not even close. This tax revenue would be a fraction of our transportation budget.

Let's raise the gas tax 20 to 60 cents per gallon and increase tolls for trucks. The bigger the gas guzzler (e.g., a sport utility vehicle), the more you pay. The rest of the world is thinking, "Do I really need to pollute this much?" and "How can I reduce my vehicle size and cost?"

Conversely, we are buying bigger vehicles, increasing fuel use and pollution. Vehicle efficiency is improving, but it is not even close to where it needs to be, especially with the Trump administration eliminating efficiency standards.

Large SUVs and trucks are causing massive damage to our crumbling infrastructure and irrevocable harm to our atmosphere. A tractor-trailer, skipping the Maine Turnpike toll and taking Route 100 from Portland to Auburn, can cause the damage of [nearly 10,000 cars](#)! A single heavy SUV can cause the damage of 100 light cars.

This "damage" tax could pay for our roads. Let's put a portion of that revenue into clean and efficient rail transportation, including passenger and freight services, instead of turning our last veins of clean transportation into bike trails. How about converting a lane of the interstate and make that into the bike trail? These are ideas we should be considering.

Paul Weiss

founding member, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; member, Transportation and Energy Committee, Sierra Club Maine

Cumberland

A funny, yet serious look at our infrastructure problems:

3.01.2018 – Following the gist of the preceding posts, repairing roads and bridges is not sexy. Warning – strong language in the following 2015 video by John Oliver (HBO):



After 18 agonizing years, state and federal transportation professionals still continue to push 2B-2, a controversial alternative THAT:

- fails to satisfy the original “limited-access connection between I-395 and Route 9 east of Route 46” study system linkage need,
- was removed from further consideration in January 2003 for serious safety concerns only to be reinstated by September 2003,
- satisfied only 20% (one in five) of the study’s original purpose and needs in April 2009, when five other alternatives met 100%,
- was secretly chosen as preferred alternative without including the Public Advisory Committee and community leaders in the decision-making process, intentionally withholding all information for the 32 month period from April 2009 to December 2011,
- the FHWA project manager proclaimed did not meet purpose and needs in December 2011, only to be silenced by his superiors.

MaineDOT will squander \$61 million on 2B-2, despite the fact that: 14.4% (352) of Maine’s bridges are rated as structurally deficient AND “Maine has an annual \$159 million funding shortfall for roads and bridges, which the state has offset by borrowing hundreds of millions in recent years (Portland Press Herald 2.23.2018).” Wouldn’t that \$61 million be better spent on unmet transportation needs?

[Click here to view this YouTube video by John Oliver \(HBO\).](#)

January 2018 [ARTBA report](#) on our nation's structurally deficient bridges, based on just released FHWA 2017 data, is discussed on the [January 29, 2018 NBC Nightly News](#):

[Home](#) / [Press Releases](#) / Over 54,000 American Bridges Structurally Deficient, Analysis of New Federal Data Shows

2018 Deficient Bridge Report



Data Available: www.artbabridgereport.org

Highlights:

- 54,259 of the nation's 612,677 bridges are rated "structurally deficient."
- Americans cross these deficient bridges 174 million times daily.
- Average age of a structurally deficient bridge is 67 years, compared to 40 years for non-deficient bridges.
- One in three (226,837) U.S. bridges have identified repair needs.
- One in three (17,726) Interstate highway bridges have identified repair needs.
- Website features listing of deficient bridges by state and congressional district.



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National Bridge Inventory: Maine

Ranking

- Of the 2,458 bridges in the state, 326, or 13.2 percent, are classified as structurally deficient. This means one of the key elements is in poor or worse condition.¹
- 10 structurally deficient bridges in the state are on the Interstate Highway System.
- 127 bridges are posted for load, which may restrict the size and weight of vehicles crossing the structure.
- Over the last five years, bridge investment has accounted for 30.6 percent of highway and bridge contract awards in the state, compared to an average of 28.9 percent nationwide.²
- Over the last 10 years, 215 new bridges have been constructed in the state; 94 have undergone major reconstruction.
- The state has identified needed repairs on 19 bridges; which the state estimates will cost \$372.4 million.³

10

Based on % of
Structurally Deficient
Bridges



The Trump Infrastructure Plan from the [left](#) and the [right](#):



America's Crumbling Infrastructure Under Donald Trump | The Last Word | MSNBC



Trump's infrastructure plan: What we know

Bridges & Structures

FHWA Data from 12.31.15 indicated 34.2% (831) of Maine's bridges were deficient, now the data, a mere two years later, indicates that 13.3% (326) of Maine's bridges are deficient?? How did the percentage of our deficient bridges seemingly decrease? FHWA discontinued F.O. tracking on 12.31.2015, delaying new performance measures reporting until October 2018...

Has anyone else noticed the percentage of Maine's deficient bridges seems to have mysteriously gotten a whole lot better?

- **Structurally Deficient (SD):** This term was previously defined in <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/0650dsup.cfm> as having a condition rating of 4 or less for Item 58 (Deck), Item 59 (Superstructure), Item 60 (Substructure), or Item 62 (Culvert), OR having an appraisal rating of 2 or less for Item 67 (Structural Condition) or Item 71 (Waterway Adequacy) *Beginning with the 2018 data archive*, this term will be defined in accordance with the [Pavement and Bridge Condition Performance Measures final rule](#), published in January of 2017, as a classification given to a bridge which has any component [Item 58, 59, 60, or 62] in Poor or worse condition [code of 4 or less].
- **Functionally Obsolete (FO):** This term was previously defined in <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/0650dsup.cfm> as having an appraisal rating of 3 or less for Item 68 (Deck Geometry), Item 69 (Underclearances), or Item 72 (Approach Roadway Alignment), OR having an appraisal rating of 3 for Item 67 (Structural Condition) or Item 71 (Waterway Adequacy). Functionally obsolete is a legacy classification that was used to implement the Highway Bridge Program, which was discontinued with the enactment of MAP-21. As a result, fiscal year 2015 was the last year outstanding Highway Bridge Program funds could be obligated on eligible projects, including ones with bridges that were once classified as functionally obsolete. Therefore, FHWA is no longer tracking this measure, and *will not be publishing it on our website for the 2016 data forward*. Our focus has shifted to a performance-based program as established in MAP-21 and continued in the Fast Act. As such, we encourage the use of the Good-Fair-Poor bridge condition measures outlined in the [Pavement and Bridge Condition Performance Measures final rule](#), published in January of 2017.

| FHWA Data as of this date: | # Bridges | # S.D. | % S.D. | # F.O. | % F.O. | Total # Deficient Bridges | Total % Deficient Bridges |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 12.31.2017 | 2458 | 326 | 13.3% | - | - | 326 | 13.3% |
| 12.31.2016 | 2450 | 352 | 14.4% | - | - | 352 | 14.4% |
| 12.31.2015 | 2431 | 361 | 14.8% | 470 | 19.3% | 831 | 34.2% |

[Definitions of S.D. and F.O. and data used in above table from official FHWA website.](#)

“Functionally obsolete is a legacy classification... fiscal year 2015 was the last year outstanding Highway Bridge Program funds could be obligated on eligible projects, including ones with bridges that were once classified as functionally obsolete... FHWA is no longer tracking this measure, and will not be publishing it on our website for the 2016 data forward.”

Maine still has a third of the state's bridges that are sub-par; you can't just forget those 470 F.O. bridges that are conveniently not counted for now...

BRIDGE

PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Final Rulemaking

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published in the *Federal Register* (82 FR5886) a [final rule](#) establishing performance measures for State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) to use in managing pavement and bridge performance on the National Highway System (NHS). The National Performance Management Measures; Assessing Pavement Condition for the National Highway Performance Program and Bridge Condition for the National Highway Performance Program Final Rule addresses requirements established by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and reflects passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The rule is effective **May 20, 2017**.

| Performance Measures | |
|----------------------|---|
| ✓ | % of NHS bridges by deck area classified as in Good condition |
| ✓ | % of NHS bridges by deck area classified as in Poor condition |

Condition-Based Performance Measures

- Measures are based on deck area.
- The classification is based on National Bridge Inventory (NBI) condition ratings for item 58 - Deck, 59 - Superstructure, 60 - Substructure, and 62 - Culvert.
- Condition is determined by the lowest rating of deck, superstructure, substructure, or culvert. If the lowest rating is greater than or equal to 7, the bridge is classified as good; if is less than or equal to 4, the classification is poor. (Bridges rated below 7 but above 4 will be classified as fair; there is no related performance measure.)
- Deck area is computed using NBI item 49 - Structure Length, and 52 - Deck Width or 32 - Approach Roadway Width (for some culverts).

Target Setting

State DOTs:

- Must establish targets for all bridges carrying the NHS, which includes on- and off-ramps connected to the NHS within a State, and bridges carrying the NHS that cross a State border, regardless of ownership.
- Must establish statewide 2- and 4-year targets by May 20, 2018, and report targets by October 1, 2018, in the Baseline Performance Period Report.
- May adjust 4-year targets at the Mid Performance Period Progress Report (October 1, 2020).

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs):

- Support the relevant State DOT(s) 4-year target or establish their own by 180 days after the State DOT(s) target is established.

BRIDGE

PERFORMANCE MEASURES



| Key Dates | |
|--|--|
| May 20, 2017 | Final rule effective date. |
| January 1, 2018 | 1st 4- year performance period begins. |
| May 20, 2018 | Initial 2- and 4-year targets established. |
| October 1, 2018 | Baseline Performance Period Report for the 1 st Performance Period due. State DOTs report 2-year and 4-year targets; etc. |
| Within 180 days of relevant State DOT(s) target establishment | MPOs must commit to support State target or establish separate quantifiable target. |
| October 1, 2020 | Mid Performance Period Progress Report for the 1 st Performance Period due. State DOTs report 2-year condition/performance; progress toward achieving 2-year targets; etc. |
| December 31, 2021 | 1st 4-year performance period ends. |
| October 1, 2022 | Full Performance Period Progress Report for 1 st performance period due. State DOTs report 4-year condition/performance; progress toward achieving 4-year targets; etc. Baseline report due for 2 nd performance period due. State DOTs report 2- and 4-year targets; baseline condition, etc. |

Other Specifics

- State DOT targets should be determined from asset management analyses and procedures and reflect investment strategies that work toward achieving a state of good repair over the life cycle of assets at minimum practicable cost. State DOTs may establish additional measures and targets that reflect asset management objectives.
- The rule applies to bridges carrying the NHS, including bridges on on- and off-ramps connected to the NHS.
- If for 3 consecutive years more than 10.0% of a State DOT's NHS bridges' total deck area is classified as Structurally Deficient, the State DOT must obligate and set aside National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) funds for eligible projects on bridges on the NHS.
- Deck area of all border bridges counts toward both States DOTs' totals.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/ to learn about training, guidance, and other implementation-related information.

Leanna Garfield | Feb. 12, 2018

Trump has revealed a \$1.5 trillion plan to repair America's infrastructure — [here's the most dangerous bridge in every state](#)

Monday, President Trump will reveal his long-awaited, \$1.5 trillion [infrastructure plan](#) — a key campaign promise that's now part of his domestic agenda.

One of the plan's goals is to repair and rebuild America's bridges, which [received a C+ grade](#) in the American Society of Civil Engineers' [most recent Infrastructure Report Card](#). (Overall, US infrastructure scored a D+, and the ASCE estimates the country needs to spend [\\$4.5 trillion by 2025](#) to improve its roads, bridges, dams, airports, and more.)

Every state has at least one structurally deficient bridge, which the US Department of Transportation (DOT) [defines](#) as when one or more key bridge components (e.g. the deck, superstructure, or substructure) is in "poor" condition. There are [185 million daily crossings](#) on nearly 56,000 structurally deficient US bridges, according to the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

Using 2016 data from the [US Federal Highway Administration](#), Auto Insurance Center [found](#) the most structurally deficient bridge — based on the highest number of components in poor or worse condition — in each state and Washington, DC.

Maine — I-295 Southbound over Route 88 in Cumberland County



Google Maps/Screenshot

America's bridges are looking pretty shaky. Ten years after the I-35W bridge over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis collapsed, killing 13 people, 1 out of every 11 bridges in the [United States](#) is structurally deficient, according to the [American Society of Civil Engineers](#). That's a slight improvement from a decade ago, when 12.3% of our bridges were in need of serious repair. But it's still worrisome, especially for anyone making one of the 188 million trips over those 56,007 spans.

Structurally deficient bridges “may not be imminently unsafe, [but] they are in need of attention,” according to the [American Road & Transportation Builders Association](#). But with 1,276 miles of bridges in need of repair across the country, it's hard for government agencies to keep up with the necessary fixes, even as the amount of money dedicated to bridge repairs and construction increased from \$23.2 billion in 2007 to \$32.3 billion in 2016. At the current rate, it would take three decades to upgrade all the crumbling bridges in the U.S.

In some states the situation is much worse than in others, [according to the builders association](#). The organization ranked all 50 states based on their share of deficient bridges and also highlighted the busiest troubled bridges in each state. While fewer than 3% of the bridges in Arizona, Texas, Florida, and Nevada are in bad shape, the same can't be said for these 15 states, which have the highest rates of structurally deficient bridges in the U.S.

9. Maine



A view of the Maine coast | Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP/Getty Images

- **Percent of bridges that are structurally deficient:** 14.4%
- **Most traveled troubled bridge:** I-295 Southbound over Route 88

Maine has 2,450 bridges, of which 352 have serious structural problems. The southbound I-295 crossing over Route 88 in Yarmouth is the busiest. The bridge was built in 1959 and carries 26,370 cars per day.

“Linda Johns, who represents the town of Brewer for the regional agency, said the \$61 Million would be better spent on more pressing local needs and that traffic has declined since the project was first proposed 16 years ago, according to the Bangor Daily News.”

Brewer City Manager Steve Bost described the DOT as “an unyielding bureaucracy that is unwilling to listen and unwilling to move.” Watching this unfold today, in my humble opinion, is precisely why people have lost faith in government,” he said.

The text under the picture is really precious: “Maine DOT’s jolly logo for a project nobody wants.”

Maine DOT Bullies Local Planners Into Voting for Highway Expansion

By Angie Schmitt | Apr 7, 2016 | 3



H

ere’s a story about how DOTs can ram through road projects that locals don’t even want.

Regional planners in Bangor, Maine, say they were forced to approve a highway expansion project because the state DOT threatened to pull all of the region’s transportation funding.

The 395-Route 9 Connector is a \$61 million project that will link two other highways and

speed freight truck trips to and from Canada. Towns in the footprint of the project, which would demolish eight homes, say it’s not needed and the money would be better spent on other things. Maine DOT has not been deterred.

Representatives from the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System — the regional planning agency — told the [Bangor Daily News](#) they were “held hostage” by state officials who said they would withhold \$57 million in region transportation funds if the highway wasn’t approved.

The state had added the highway project to its spending plan last summer. But officials in the Bangor area resisted adding the project to their own transportation plan. Without the regional agency’s approval, the state could not get the final go-ahead for the project from the Federal Highway Administration.

Linda Johns, who represents the town of Brewer for the regional agency, said the \$61 million would be better spent on more pressing local needs and that traffic has declined since the project was first proposed 16 years ago, according to the Bangor Daily News.

Brewer City Manager Steve Bost described the DOT as “an unyielding bureaucracy that is unwilling to listen and unwilling to move”

“Watching this unfold today, in my humble opinion, is precisely why people have lost faith in government,” he said.



Maine DOT’s jolly logo for a road project nobody wants.

A moment in time that I will soon not forget...



Micky Bedell | BDN

Larry Adams of Brewer (center) speaks at a Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System's policy committee meeting Friday morning. Adams spoke out passionately against the project, saying his home would be razed. Committee members said they did not like being forced to approve a new Transportation Improvement Program that includes the controversial Interstate-395-Route 9 connector or risk losing \$57 million in road projects for this year.

[Click here to view this BDN article.](#)

TIGER Funds coming to Maine to fix 3 bridges:

SUSAN COLLINS

UNITED STATES SENATOR *for* MAINE

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Senator Collins Announces \$10.8 Million Grant to Replace Three Bridges in Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties

In: *Press Releases* Posted Tue, 03/06/2018 - 14:24

Share: [f](#) [t](#) [e](#)

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Susan Collins, the Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, announced today that the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) will receive \$10,836,220 to replace three bridges in Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties that are either structurally deficient, in a fracture-critical state, or both.

"I am delighted to announce that the State of Maine will receive a more than \$10.8 million investment to help replace three structurally deficient bridges in Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties through the TIGER grant program," **said Senator Collins, the Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee.**

"Local residents rely on these bridges, which connect them with adjacent communities and provide critical transportation links for loggers and visitors as well. This project will improve public safety and help to create and support jobs in rural Maine."

"This TIGER Grant is very important to this rural region of our state that is economically challenged," **said Maine Department of Transportation Commissioner David Bernhardt.** "Replacing these three bridges is critical as detours would consist of 12 to nearly 100 miles one-way. This grant will help to maintain access for area residents and for maintaining the forestry infrastructure. I want to thank Senator Susan Collins for her efforts in helping to secure this all-important TIGER Grant and for her continued efforts in recognizing the need to prioritize Maine's infrastructure."

The three bridges that will be replaced under MDOT's proposal, the "Penquis Region Rural Bridges Project," are as follows:

1. **Mattawamkeag Bridge** (*Town of Mattawamkeag*) – on State Route 2 over the Mattawamkeag River.
2. **Pleasant River Bridge** (*Town of Milo*) – on Pleasant Street over the Pleasant River.
3. **West Branch Bridge** (*T3 Indian Purchase Township*) – on State Route 11 over the West Branch of the Penobscot River.

Maine DOT wants to replace the bridges before they fall into complete disrepair and have negative effects on the region's infrastructure and economy.

TIGER provides federal assistance for vital transportation projects across the country. Since the program's inception in 2009, Senator Collins has secured more than \$133 million for key transportation investments throughout Maine, including bridges, seaports, and rail projects. Maine TIGER grant applications have been successful in every funding round.

The 3 bridges from Senator Collins Press Release:



\$11M Federal Grant will Fund Several Bridge Replacements



By Brian Sullivan | Posted: Tue 4:27 PM, Mar 06, 2018



WASHINGTON, D.C. (WABI) - The Maine Department of Transportation will replace three bridges in Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties thanks to a nearly \$11 million federal grant.

The Mattawamkeag Bridge in Mattawamkeag, Pleasant River Bridge in Milo and West Branch Bridge in T3 Indian Purchase Township are all going to be replaced.

Officials identified the three as being structurally deficient, in a fracture-critical state, or both.

The D-O-T says they want to replace the bridges before they fall into complete disrepair and have negative effects on the region's infrastructure and economy.

[Click here to view WABI TV article.](#)



Federal Grant Would Replace Structurally Deficient Bridges



By Associated Press | Posted: Sat 2:50 PM, Mar 10, 2018



AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) - Three Maine bridges will be replaced thanks to a \$10.8 million federal grant.

A federal TIGER grant will replace bridges deemed structurally deficient or at risk of fracture in Piscataquis and Penobscot counties.

The Maine Department of Transportation says it wants to replace the bridges before they fall into complete disrepair and harm the region's economy and infrastructure.

Maine Department of Transportation Commissioner David Bernhardt said the grant will help loggers, area residents and visitors in an economically challenged area.

The bridges are Mattawamkeag Bridge, Pleasant River Bridge and West Branch Bridge.

Republican U.S. Sen. Susan Collins is chair of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee and says she helped secure the grant.

[Click here to view.](#)

COMMENTARY

National environmental expert: Why Trump's infrastructure plan is doomed to failure



By Rob Schofield

22 days ago

In Commentary



6



6



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12



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Print This Post

If you're trying to get your arms around President Trump's proposed infrastructure plan, be sure to check out [the assessment provided by Dr. Joe Romm at Think Progress](#). Romm calls the plan "a whole lot of waste, just like his border wall."

This is from Romm's post:

"The President's long-awaited \$1.5 trillion plan rolled out on Monday had already been [widely criticized for including a mere \\$200 billion](#) in actual federal money — and a lot of wishful thinking about leveraging vast amounts of state and local revenue.

But the plan's proposal to gut the normal environmental review process and quickly push through projects without adequate vetting is disastrous. Worsening deluges, sea level rise, extended droughts, and ever hotter temperatures will test even the most carefully designed projects. But it will likely ruin the least carefully designed ones.

'The impact of not considering climate change when planning infrastructure means you end up building the wrong thing, in the wrong place, to the wrong standards,' as urban planning and climate expert Michael Kuby [told the New York Times](#). 'That's a whole lot of waste.'

Also, failing to consider climate change could put lives at risk if infrastructure isn't designed to handle the kind of super-storms scientists say we'll see more of in the future.

A [277-page peer-reviewed report from Trump's own Environmental Protection Agency](#) found that by 2100, the cumulative cost of adapting just the nation's roads to climate change would be \$230 billion. That's for the business-as-usual emissions scenario for carbon pollution that Trump's pro-pollution policies would result in."

"But the plan's proposal to gut the normal environmental review process and quickly push through projects without adequate vetting is disastrous...The impact of not considering climate change when planning infrastructure means you end up building the wrong thing, in the wrong place, to the wrong standards..." (Dr. Joe Romm 2.13.18)

A Tip for Infrastructure Builders: Fix It First

Before we invest in new infrastructure, we need to maintain and update what we have.

MARCH 2018



By Aaron M. Renn | Columnist
Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute

“...mayors and governors love to cut ribbons on new projects. It’s less sexy to fix potholes...”

Public officials and advocates often suggest infrastructure investment as a way to ignite economic dynamism and growth. But as a mature country with a large and aging infrastructure base, we need to be cautious about how we invest in it to be sure we are doing so where it makes sense.

Building new infrastructure certainly made sense in 1825, when the Erie Canal opened. It reduced transportation costs in the corridor across New York state by 90 percent versus overland cartage. The national electric grid, the interstate highway system, and water and sewer networks delivered immense benefits for both the economy and quality of life.

And new types of infrastructure do arise that require us to build completely new systems. Cellular telephone and broadband data networks come to mind.

But what we increasingly have today is less of a need to massively invest in new kinds of infrastructure and more of a need to maintain what we already have and update it for the 21st century.

Yes, there is a need for expanded traditional infrastructure in some places. Where there is high demand and rapid growth, adding incremental infrastructure to support that growth makes sense. This is the case with new transit investments in New York City, for example. The city badly needs an extra pair of rail tunnels under the Hudson River. However, building new subway lines makes no sense if the core subway system is falling apart, which it is. The result is that ridership is declining when it should be growing. Decreasing reliability is chasing riders away.

Infrastructure investment is also not likely to spur economic growth in depressed locales. Where I grew up in southern Indiana, Interstate 64 runs east-west across the state, linking St. Louis with Louisville, Ky. Though it might have made sense to build it as part of a national network, this lightly traveled road hasn’t spurred much economic growth in the rural counties it passes through. Visiting Flint, Mich., it’s hard not to be struck by the juxtaposition of a pristine eight-lane interstate alongside the decayed infrastructure of that economically distressed city.

Today’s businesses care much more about things like an available, quality labor force than they do about infrastructure. That’s because despite its age, our infrastructure is already pretty good.

Prioritizing spending on maintenance is also more equitable. Only the faster-growing places need lots of new infrastructure. But almost every place has infrastructure maintenance needs.

The line between expansion and maintenance is not always clear. Rebuilding of existing infrastructure often and appropriately involves upgrades of various types. The standards and needs of today's society are different from those of the past. For example, there are many urban streets in America that were built without sidewalks. Cities might want to do more than simply fix potholes, perhaps adding sidewalks and bike lanes. But this need not involve a major reconceptualization of the roadway, such as widening a two-lane street into a four-lane divided highway.

So the first challenge of infrastructure is to be sure to focus on taking care of what we have rather than rushing to build new things. This can be difficult to do politically, because mayors and governors love to cut ribbons on new projects. It's less sexy to fix potholes or repair aging water lines.

Beyond a "fix-it-first" policy, governments need to start addressing the factors that extend timelines and raise costs. The amount of regulatory red tape needed to build projects, for example, has dramatically risen in past decades. A study by the Regional Plan Association found that the average length of time needed to complete a federally required environmental impact statement increased from slightly over two years in the 1970s to eight years by 2011. A 2008 study found that the length of time needed to complete an assessment was growing by an average of 37 days per year. Not good.

Red tape isn't the only issue. State and local governments find their own ways to shoot themselves in the foot. In December, *The New York Times* documented how bad management and featherbedding on an epic scale – by unions, consultants and contractors – had led to grotesque inflation in the city's subway construction costs, resulting in what the *Times* labeled "the most expensive mile of subway track on earth."

Lastly, there is the tangle of taxes and fees, levied by multiple levels of government, that finance our infrastructure. These aren't always aligned with infrastructure needs. The federal and state gasoline taxes, for example, generate a lot of money for spending on roads and other forms of surface transport. This money can't be spent on other infrastructure, even where critically needed. That's why Flint is served by a magnificent interstate while having serious water and sewer infrastructure problems. Rethinking our system of infrastructure finance includes not only the distribution of government revenue streams but also the role of private capital and new ways of taxation – a vehicle miles tax versus a gas tax, for example.

In short, simply pouring more tax revenue into building new infrastructure or expanding what we have is not the best plan. We need to refocus on maintenance, deal with regulatory and other barriers to efficient project delivery, and better align our revenues with our needs. What we need in 2018 is very different from what we needed in 1825.

[Click here to view this article.](#)

By Nick Bennett, Special to the BDN • March 8, 2018

[Click here to view on-line.](#)

OPINION



Maine companies want to use toxic soil in road construction. This is an unnecessary risk.

There is an effort to allow companies to bring soils from out of state contaminated with lead, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), asbestos and other toxic chemicals, treat them with an untested and unproven technology, and then use the treated contaminated soil as fill for constructing roads and parking lots throughout Maine.

The Maine Legislature's Environment and Natural Resources Committee is considering [rules to do this](#), and we strongly urge legislators to reject these rules.

The treatment technology, called “asphalt emulsion,” entails spraying liquid asphalt on contaminated soil and allowing it to dry. The treated soil could then be used under roads, parking lots and buildings, and in other construction projects.

There are many unanswered questions. What happens when road surfaces crack and water leaks through these contaminated soils underneath the road surface? What happens when workers tear up a road over these soils for resurfacing? Will the contaminants spread in the wind? Will tearing up the road surface let lead or PCBs leak into groundwater or nearby rivers and streams?

Maine's Department of Environmental Protection has allowed the use of asphalt emulsion in the past, but only for soils contaminated with petroleum — not soils with significant amounts of other dangerous chemicals. Now, companies in Maine want to bring in contaminated soils from out-of-state urban or formerly industrial areas, and **these soils may contain compounds other than petroleum, such as lead, PCBs and asbestos.**

I have reviewed hundreds of documents from the department's technical staff obtained through a Freedom of Access Act request. These documents clearly show that career staff have grave concerns about whether this technology can actually work in the long term to contain toxic contaminants such as lead, PCBs or asbestos.

One staff person described the situation in an internal email I reviewed: “[W]e just do not have answers. Not for projects in Maine, or projects in other states.”

According to this career staff person, it appears that no other state allows soils found at urban or industrial sites and then treated with this unproven technology to be used widely in construction.

Another career staffer stated in an internal email that the complete lack of studies showing whether asphalt emulsion works successfully as a treatment for a broad range of toxic chemicals gave him “heartburn.”

He stated that asphalt emulsion companies had “inadequate testing requirements” to know what is actually in the soils they take in. He had “questions about whether facility operators are able to understand the data they receive.” He also worried about “the impressive amount of money to be made by taking anything they can,” and called that “the icing on an already unpalatable cake.”

Asphalt emulsion is not a proven technology for treating the wide range of soil contamination for which some Maine companies want to use it. There is no evidence to support its use for hazardous contaminants such as lead, PCBs or asbestos.

These are contaminants that can be present in dangerous quantities in soils excavated from urban areas and former industrial sites. These are also contaminants that [do not break down over time](#). They exist essentially forever. There is no evidence that asphalt emulsion can bind these contaminants permanently, keep Mainers safe and prevent toxic material from entering our air and water.

Materials like lead, PCBs and asbestos are too dangerous to spread throughout Maine under our roads, buildings and parking lots. The Legislature should not allow Maine companies to use dangerous contaminated soils as construction material all over our state. There is no proof that it is safe to do so, and Maine cannot afford to make the wrong decision. There is too much at stake.

For those of us that forced to endure, through no fault of our own, the construction of and commissioning of the 2B-2 connector, we will be faced with possible negative changes in our well water, cracks in foundations and septic systems and forced to put up with construction noises and smells for some 2 years of construction activities. Our quality of life is minimized by this project, a project that does not meet the original study purpose and needs and many do not support, and we face a real monetary loss in property values that most people depend on financially in their senior years. Many of us will not benefit from this road and because of its physical location will never even use it. If all of that isn't enough, we now may have to worry—forever—what's in the road material?

—R U FREAKIN' KIDDING ME—

Portland Press Herald

Dispute over traffic project escalates as Wiscasset reports new state threat

Maine's Department of Transportation says it won't create off-street parking to make up for spots lost on Main Street if it has to follow local ordinances, the town says in a court filing.

BY [COLIN WOODARD](#) STAFF WRITER | MARCH 3, 2018

The Maine Department of Transportation has threatened to remove all parking from Wiscasset's Main Street without building alternative spaces if the town requires the state's Route 1 traffic improvement project to comply with local ordinances, the town asserted in a court filing.

Such a move would leave downtown Wiscasset without adequate parking, a scenario that local business owners describe in catastrophic terms. The state's threat represents a further escalation in [tensions among this midcoast community of 3,700, the department and Gov. Paul LePage](#), who many residents believe is behind the department's aggressive strategy to force through the project on its terms.

"Clearly, if they eliminate parking for the 30 small businesses, there's no way we can survive," said Keith Oehmig, proprietor of the Wiscasset Bay Gallery on Main Street and a spokesman for a coalition of business owners. "We're dependent on cars and parking in these small towns. It's not as if people can take subways and trains in."

Wiscasset [sued](#) MDOT on Nov. 28 over the state's \$5 million plan to mitigate the notorious summertime traffic bottlenecks in the town's historic village center, after the LePage administration allegedly reneged on key promises and asserted that it did not have to comply with local ordinances. Last month, an attorney representing the town told residents it had reached a compromise with the department, but that the deal had been [scuttled by LePage himself](#), who they said insists there be no parking on Main Street, regardless of its predicted effects on traffic or business.

In a motion filed March 2, attorneys representing the town said MDOT had told them it might simply drop a component of the project: creating parking lots off nearby side streets to make up for the parking spots lost on Main Street. The motion asks the state Business and Consumer Court in Portland to prevent work on any part of the project from commencing until the department seeks and receives the town's historic preservation review.

"This raises the possibility that MDOT might seek to build a truncated project that strips all parking from Main Street, but does not provide any off-street parking in its place, a configuration that was never reviewed or discussed with the town and that does even more violence to the local interests than the original scheme," attorney John Shumadine wrote in the filing.

Asked for a response, MDOT spokesman Ted Talbot sent a short written statement that did not refute the town's account.

“MaineDOT will be responding formally to the town’s latest arguments through the court system,” Talbot wrote. “This important project to address the Wiscasset traffic delays and improve certain downtown infrastructure elements has substantial local support and regional significance. MaineDOT intends to move forward with this project.”

STATE ‘SNEERING AT LOCAL LAWS’

The department also has filed motions asking the court to order the town to pay for any increased project costs incurred to comply with local ordinances. The town asked the court to dismiss these counterclaims Monday, citing a Maine law that protects parties from claims intended to financially intimidate them from asserting their legal or free speech rights.

The MDOT also contends that the town’s historic preservation ordinance is not a zoning ordinance, and therefore it does not have to comply with the ordinance under state law.

“Wiscasset’s history and its economic well-being mean absolutely nothing to MDOT; in their eyes, Wiscasset’s Main Street is just another piece of road,” said Ralph Doering III, a seasonal resident of the area whose family owns several of the most affected downtown commercial properties and has pledged to cover the town’s legal expenses so it can continue the suit. “They’re sneering at local laws.”

The spokesman for a group of residents who favor the project disagrees, blaming the town for provoking MDOT with its lawsuit.

“If the MDOT were to walk away from doing the entire project, our fear is that we could lose all our parking (and) this would happen because of those opponents who refuse to work with the MDOT,” Brad Sevaldson, co-owner of the Birch home furnishings store on Main Street, said via email. “They say they want to talk, but they don’t want to listen themselves and add constructive pieces to this project.

“The governor has only gotten involved at this very end of the issue since their lawsuit was brought into the picture,” Sevaldson wrote, while declining to answer follow-up questions. “So, the lawsuit stops and discussions can continue.”

The lead attorney for the town, Peter Murray, did not respond to requests for comment.

TOWN ALLEGES BROKEN COMMITMENTS

Wiscasset’s village center – a largely intact complex of 18th- and 19th-century buildings that was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 – is the site of notorious summer traffic jams 2 to 3 miles long on Route 1 on the north and south approaches to the Davey Bridge that spans the Sheepscot River. The state has been trying to solve the problem for more than half a century.

The state’s latest plan, unveiled in spring 2016, promises to improve traffic flow during the worst jams by 12 percent to 14 percent, mostly by adding two traffic lights and “bump out” pedestrian-crossing waiting areas in the village – components that no one opposes. But it also seeks to remove parking on Main Street – currently 23 spaces – and parts of key side streets, measures that the state’s studies say account for just 2 percent to 4 percent of flow improvement.

Residents and the town Board of Selectmen initially supported the plan nonetheless, but majorities of both now oppose it because they say the state has not upheld its end of the bargain and has broken key promises. In June 2017, residents [revoked their support](#) in a town referendum after the state reneged on commitments to use federal funding, and thus abide by the associated historic preservation and environmental reviews and requirements that come with it, and to not take any properties by eminent domain.

The town's lawsuit was prompted by the state's imminent plan to demolish the Haggett Garage, which it had purchased by invoking eminent domain in order to create off-street replacement parking. The state claims it does not have to abide by local ordinances before demolishing the structure; the town maintains it must under the state's Sustainable Transportation Act.

LEPAGE FED UP WITH WISCASSET

LePage appears to have taken a personal interest in the project, and has said he's had enough of the townspeople's complaints and would like to build a viaduct right over the area. "I have given MDOT full authority to fix this nightmare with or without working with Wiscasset," LePage wrote to a constituent in August. "After 65 years of trying to work with Wiscasset, the time has come to move on."

In another message, LePage, who often commutes to his Boothbay home from Augusta via Wiscasset, indicated he was fed up with traffic delays.

"Between June and September it takes approximately (give or take a few minutes) 1 hour, 20 minutes to go from Augusta to Boothbay. The rest of the year it takes 40 minutes," he wrote to a constituent. "If it were up to me – I would do what was done in Bath. I'd put a bridge from the post office to the middle of the bridge and bypass downtown. U.S. 1 is a state responsibility and not the town."

The next hearing in the case is scheduled for April 12.


Colin Woodard

As a Brewer resident, residing in that unfortunate sliver of Brewer countryside redistricted to House District #129, it deeply saddens me that I cannot vote for my friend Archie Verow. If you had to sum up Archie Verow in one word, that word would be *gentleman*; Archie's all of that—with **no personal agenda**—with **no business agenda**—and with **no political tribalism**, highly infectious factors that negatively cloud the vision of our current state legislature representatives.

Support Arthur "Archie" Verow—send him back to Augusta!!!

A Stronger Voice for Brewer! Re-Elect Arthur "Archie" VEROW STATE LEGISLATURE

Trusted • Experienced • Committed



"I would appreciate your vote so I can continue to serve the interests of the citizens of Brewer in the next legislature."
Archie

WE'RE VOTING FOR ARCHIE VEROW

"Archie will work hard to make sure that the State fulfills its obligation under the law to fund Revenue Sharing and School Funding to the City."
- Jerry Goss, Mayor and former BHS Principal

"Archie has been a strong supporter of education and deserves a second term in the Legislature."
- Janet McIntosh, Brewer School Committee


"Archie can relate to voters of many levels. He will listen to all regardless of economic status and he will represent all to the best of his ability."
- Teacher/Former Legislator, Dusty Fisher

ENDORSEMENTS

- ✓ Maine Education Association
- ✓ Maine State Employees Association
- ✓ Maine AFL-CIO

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN FOR A BETTER MAINE!

A NOTE FROM ARCHIE...




Dear Friends & Neighbors,
Like you, I want better schools, a more efficient state government, more affordable and accessible health care, lower taxes and more good-paying jobs for our citizens. I'm proud of my public service record working for the people of Brewer for more than 35 years.

It is a great honor to work for you in the Legislature helping tackle the challenges our state faces. I believe that problems are best solved by focusing on WHAT's wrong rather than WHO's wrong.
Archie Verow

Ready and Eager to Work on What Matters Most to You!

ABOUT Arthur "Archie" VEROW

- ★ Currently serving first term in the Maine Legislature
- ★ Past Brewer City Clerk
- ★ Past City Council Member (2nd term)
- ★ Served 2 terms as Brewer Mayor
- ★ Served on Board of Bangor Humane Society
- ★ Graduate Husson College
- ★ Married to Frances Doane (3 children, 3 grandchildren)



PRIORITIES FOR A BETTER MAINE

- ★ **GROW THE ECONOMY** focusing on job creation and restoration;
- ★ **REDUCE ENERGY COSTS** by expanding alternative energy sources;
- ★ **INVEST** in education, research and sound business development incentives;
- ★ **ELECT** experienced, dedicated, thoughtful and collaborative **LEADERS**;
- ★ **SUPPORT** strong public safety laws and regulations
- ★ **EXPAND** passenger rail northward

Your Input is Important to Me!
Give me your support & give me a call!
Tel: 989-7032 Email: arthurverow@hotmail.com

Authorized and paid for by the Candidate,
Paul Davis, Campaign Treasurer, 20 South Rd., Brewer ME 04412

Talking Points by Archie Verow:

ARTHUR “ARCHIE” VEROW

“The Brewer Candidate Who Puts People Ahead of Politics”

Archie seeks a Third Term in the Maine House of Representatives

He has an extensive body of experience in public service including

City Clerk for over 30 years

City Councilor – 2 terms

City Mayor – 2 terms

Maine Legislature – 2 terms

Voted 2017 “Brewer Citizen of the Year” in Recognition of Lifetime Achievements in Public Service

Currently serving on the Government Relations Committee of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Serving as Kiwanis Advisor to High School Key Club

Archie Says:

“My priority is to work for a Safe State, a Well-Educated State, and a Strong Economy that will Lead to the Creation and Growth of Good Paying Jobs for Maine People.”

“I also want to make sure that the State lives up to its obligations to adequately fund public education and to deliver State Revenue Sharing funds to lower local property taxes.”

I would very much like to hear from you on your thoughts on how you believe the State Government could better serve the people of Brewer and Maine.

E-mail address arthurverow67@gmail.com

Tel: 989-7032 cell 852-9783

Home Address: 20 Greenwood Drive, Brewer, Me 04412

Paid for by the candidate.

I will be voting for Bev Uhlenhake to be my Senator in the 129th Maine Legislature. Scrutinize Bev's qualifications and the positions that she currently holds and has held in the past—that kind of extraordinary background is exceptional in our elected officials. Bev is more than ready to make the move to Augusta. **Vote for the person with real qualifications and real background and not just a political name. Vote for Bev—our city deserves better than a drive-by senator.**



[Bev For Maine State Senate](#) The full press release:

Bev Uhlenhake announces bid for Maine State Senate

Brewer, Maine - Bev Uhlenhake, current city councilor and former mayor of Brewer, announced her candidacy for State Senate from District 8 at a gathering at Mason's Brewing Company.

“Over the last four years on City Council, I’ve talked with hundreds of citizens. They are concerned about our state, and so am I,” said Uhlenhake. “What I’ve realized during this time is that we work really hard to fix so many issues locally, but the decisions made in Augusta have a profound impact. We need a strong advocate.”

Uhlenhake, a broker at Epstein Commercial Real Estate, will use her 14 years of negotiation experience to bargain for a better Maine. She has negotiated several major deals, including the sale of both Bangor Daily News buildings and the newspaper's lease at their downtown location, the sale of Lowe's in Ellsworth to Jackson Laboratory, and the sale of the former Maine Jump to Eastern Maine Community College for their public safety training facility.

Uhlenhake's prior experience includes Director of Development at OHI, Executive Director of the Bangor Humane Society and work in Campus Living at the University of Maine. She holds a master's degree in higher education administration from Iowa State University and a bachelor's degree in German from The Ohio State University.

In addition to her work on Brewer City Council, Uhlenhake serves as the president of the Rotary Club of Bangor, which recently celebrated its centennial. Uhlenhake has also served on the boards of Mabel Wadsworth Center, the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Red Cross, and Rape Response Services. At the City, she has been involved as a member of the Planning Board, the Comprehensive Planning Committee, and the Penobscot Landing Committee.

Uhlenhake lives in Brewer with her wife, Sue, and three children, Ben (9), Ansley (7), and Quinn (7). She grew up on a farm in a small town in Ohio where her family also prepared her for the job ahead of her.

"My dad was a union worker at a tractor factory, and my mom was the school secretary in charge of dealing with the teachers' union," she said. "I remember many heated conversations around the dinner table. I learned that as long as everyone comes to the table with the goal of making the situation better, we can find solutions."

"I came to Maine not knowing what I was in for," said Uhlenhake. "That was over twenty years ago. I've made this my home and our place to raise our family. It's now time that I work even harder to make it even better."

Senate District 8 consists of the towns of Bradley, Brewer, Bucksport, Burlington, Castine, Clifton, Dedham, East Central Penobscot Unorganized Territory, Eddington, Great Pond, Holden, Lincoln, Lowell, Northwest Hancock Unorganized Territory, T32 MD Township, Orland, Orrington, Penobscot, Verona Island, and part of East Hancock Unorganized Territory.

Latest project update as gleaned from “DOT’s Data Gathering Agreement” sent to impacted residents:

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

[Redacted]
Brewer, ME 04412-9627

Project Number: STP-1891(500)
Route: Interstate 395, Route 9
Connector

[Redacted]
DATA GATHERING AGREEMENT

The Maine Department of Transportation is currently gathering preliminary engineering data for the proposed I-395/Route 9 Connector project, as identified above. Several public hearings have been held to inform and encourage public participation in the development of this important project.

Proposed centerline has been established for this project. The next step is to determine underlying soils conditions along this alignment by sending crews out to do select borings. Significant care will be taken to minimize the disruption to your property in collecting the data, however, some clearing may be necessary in grown up or hard to reach areas. Every effort will be made to keep soils disruption and clearing to a minimum.

Title 23, M.R.S.A. Section 153-B (3) allows for persons employed by the Department to enter upon property with the consent of the property owner to gather needed information. As a matter of preference and policy, MDOT representatives ask for consent from property owners to gather this needed information. If the Department is unable obtain consent of the owner, Title 23, M.R.S.A. Section 153-B (3) also authorizes the Department to seek an administrative inspection warrant from the Superior Court. We ask that you please sign this agreement and return in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

Based on the information provided above (I) (We) consent ☐
Based on the information provided above (I) (We) do not consent ☐

SIGNATURE OF OWNER(S)

DATE & PHONE NUMBER

“Proposed centerline has been established.”

“...[still] gathering preliminary engineering data...”

“The next step is...do select borings.”

Since the proposed centerline has now been established, a copy of the most current engineering drawings should have been attached to clarify the established centerline and the established right-of-way as those are the two most critical factors that determine our ultimate impact from this project.

The preliminary drawings of April 2013 were the last engineering drawings released to the public; after five years, the people most impacted by this project deserve to see this project as defined in its now-established state.

The road to a federal infrastructure package begins with a Highway Trust Fund fix

By [THE TRANSPORTATION CONSTRUCTION COALITION AND AMERICANS FOR TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY](#)

03/12/2018

American greatness is never written in the past tense. President Lincoln saw the nation's transcontinental railroad as a bold bid to unite a divided republic, while President Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System paved the way for expanded opportunities for all Americans and decades of economic growth.

Today's political leaders have the chance to follow in Lincoln and Eisenhower's footsteps by making bold investments in infrastructure. The pavement on much of our interstate highways may be top notch, but the performance of the system and its links to modal hubs is deteriorating. The 62-year-old system is outdated, overused, and underfunded. Ever-increasing congestion is causing a huge drag on the economy every year. Traffic gridlock drives up the cost of every good that American companies make, buy and export. It's a recurring \$160 billion "hidden tax" that is likely to increase in future years.

As with our past leaders, we are once again called not simply to rebuild what once was, but to envision and create the transportation network tomorrow demands. Like the recently enacted tax law, if federally led and done right, modernizing our transportation network could reduce costs, while making U.S. businesses more productive and competitive.

By far, the most critical transportation issue facing Congress is ensuring the long-term viability of the federal Highway Trust Fund. Each year, the fund provides about half the money states dedicate to capital investments in highways and bridges. However, the fund is in peril.

To keep it solvent and preserve existing infrastructure investment levels, lawmakers have transferred nearly \$145 billion from the U.S. Treasury General Fund. Without new revenue, starting in October 2020, states will face a 40 percent cut in funding for needed transportation improvements. Absent any congressional action, state transportation departments likely will start pulling back or delaying transportation improvements as early as 2019.

Two key priorities must be met:

- **Priority 1:** Provide an expanded and sustainable revenue solution to support and grow future Highway Trust Fund-supported investments as Congress and the Trump administration work to develop an infrastructure investment package. A bipartisan 253 members of the House went on record in 2017 as supporting a Highway Trust Fund fix as part of tax reform. The Transportation Construction Coalition and Americans for Transportation Mobility agree that any trust fund solution "should entail a long-term, dedicated, user-based revenue stream."
- **Priority 2:** Any additional funds provided in an infrastructure package this year should be invested in projects that will facilitate long-term regional and national economic growth and create new jobs. This is a chance to ensure enduring benefits to both the economy and America's infrastructure.

With Republicans, Democrats and President Trump all voicing support for an infrastructure bill, this is a rare chance for all parties to show how Washington can come together to accomplish big things for their constituents. This is a generational opportunity to turn blueprints and big thinking into a 21st century infrastructure network.

Let's get moving.

The DOT Data Gathering Agreement, received on March 10th, stated “the proposed centerline has been established.” That milestone is a significant decision that signals progress in the process. The DOT stated in Jan. 2012: “Town officials and the residents...deserve to be fully informed of all decisions and progress.” The establishment of the centerline quantifies the proximity impact to those citizens abutting this project. The DOT is once again guilty of “insufficient outreach.”



[MaineDOT apologizes for not informing communities of I-395/Route 9 plan](#)

By Dawn Gagnon, BDN Staff • January 6, 2012

In a statement emailed to the Bangor Daily News on Friday by MDOT spokesman Ted Talbot, the department apologized for inadequate outreach to leaders in municipalities that would be affected by the connector, which aims to alleviate heavy traffic flow between the Canadian Maritime Provinces and the federal highway system.

“The Maine Department of Transportation ... regrets the insufficient outreach by MaineDOT to leaders of the affected communities along the proposed I-395 US Route 9 connector,” the statement read. “Town officials and the residents of Brewer, Holden, Eddington and Clifton deserve to be fully informed of all decisions and progress. We recognize that it is our obligation to do so, and we will rectify this situation in the future.

“While no decisions have been made regarding whether or how to proceed with the Study, MaineDOT will continue to focus on options that we can permit, build and afford with the least amount of overall environmental and community impacts,” the statement added.

“In the coming weeks, MaineDOT officials will refocus on the public process in which residents will have ongoing opportunities to provide feedback including review of the draft environmental impact statement and public hearing(s) as needed. We look forward to hearing from all interested parties,” the statement concluded.

“We will be having a team meeting in the near future to discuss all landowners issues and concerns to date. I hope to respond to your concerns within the next two weeks.” DOT official 3.15.2018

Not sure why it would take possibly two weeks to release information that they already have, unless they are afraid of losing control of the conversation or maybe they need get their stories straight or maybe they don't want to admit that they've had this information for months and have been sitting on it or maybe they don't want to have to apologize once more for “insufficient outreach” or maybe they don't want to publicize their current activities and once again, we have the audacity to butt in and ask stupid questions.

“The Maine Department of Transportation ... **regrets the insufficient outreach by MaineDOT** to leaders of the affected communities along the proposed I-395 US Route 9 connector,” the statement read. “Town officials and the **residents** of Brewer, Holden, Eddington and Clifton **deserve to be fully informed of all decisions and progress.** **We recognize that it is our obligation to do so,** and we will rectify this situation in the future.” BDN 1.06.2018

[Click here to view BDN article:](#)

We deserve to have the latest and most accurate information so that we can measure the full impact from this controversial project to our quality of life; we deserve that new information now—direct from the DOT—not weeks or months from now at another depersonalized public meeting in Eddington chaired by someone from PA. The establishment of the centerline is not a state secret; there is no rational reason to keep this information secret.

The centerline establishment is a milestone in this project and should have been briefed out per MaineDOT's own words of obligation in January 2012.

Question: What is MaineDOT's definition of obligation?

Answer: Apparently, outreach only when you get caught...

Portland Press Herald

Engineering firm behind collapsed Miami bridge also designed Maine bridges

[FIGG Bridge Engineers also worked on major bridge projects in Maine, including the Penobscot Narrows Bridge.](#)

BY PETER MCGUIRE | STAFF WRITER | 3.16.2018 (EXCERPT)

A company that helped design a Miami pedestrian bridge that killed at least six when it collapsed Thursday was involved in the construction of at least four bridges in Maine. FIGG Bridge Engineers, an internationally known firm based in Tallahassee, Florida, helped design the new Sarah Mildred Long Bridge between Kittery and Portsmouth, New Hampshire; the Penobscot Narrows Bridge near Bucksport; the Sagadahoc Bridge in Bath; and Wiscasset Bridge, according to materials promoting FIGG's involvement in the Sarah Mildred Long project.

The company worked on the Kittery-Portsmouth bridge in partnership with Hardesty & Hanover, a Boston-based engineering firm. FIGG also worked on the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge in Boston.

FIGG, in a statement Friday, said the Miami event was “unprecedented” in the company’s 40-year history.

“No other bridge designed by FIGG Bridge Engineers has ever experienced such a collapse,” the company said in a prepared statement.

None of the three Maine bridges FIGG designed were included in a list of [structurally-deficient bridges](#) put out last year by TRIP, a national transportation research group.

The \$164.8 million Sarah Mildred Long Bridge was supposed to open in September, but has been delayed six months by Cianbro, the Pittsfield-based construction company building it.

The Maine Department of Transportation has said the lift span bridge is safe and operational. The department [recently ordered Cianbro](#), to open it to traffic by the end of March.

Department spokesman Ted Talbot said Maine and New Hampshire transportation departments were preparing a joint statement regarding FIGG’s work it would release Friday.

By Lori Valigra • March 16, 2018

The **Maine Department of Transportation** reassured Mainers Friday about the safety of **state bridges** designed by the same engineering company that designed a Miami-area bridge that collapsed this week.

The [collapse of the pedestrian footbridge](#) near Florida International University crushed at least five cars and killed six people, according to the [Sun Sentinel](#), which quoted police as saying more fatalities could be discovered.

The newspaper said the bridge was put in place last Saturday and was to be completed in 2019. The investigation into the cause of the collapse started Friday.

Figg Engineering Group of Tallahassee, Florida, one of the companies that designed that bridge, also has been involved in several bridge designs in Maine. They include the Donald E. Davey Bridge between Wiscasset and Edgecomb, the Sagadahoc Bridge between Bath and Woolwich, the Penobscot Narrows Bridge between Prospect and Verona Island, and the fixed spans of the Sarah Mildred Long bridge between Kittery and Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

“These bridges were designed in accordance with the latest national design standards and are all in very good condition. MaineDOT’s experience with Figg is that they are experienced and competent bridge designers and we are confident that these bridges are safe,” MaineDOT spokesman Ted Talbot wrote in a statement released Friday afternoon.

“MaineDOT’s bridges are safe and will continue to be evaluated based on the latest National Bridge Inspection Standards. Due to the investigation being in its early stages, we, along with the rest of the nation, do not know the cause of the bridge collapse nor will we speculate,” he said.

He said the Florida bridge used accelerated bridge construction, or innovative design and construction techniques widely employed in bridge construction to reduce onsite construction times to avoid associated impacts.

“Because it refers to a variety of techniques, and not a specific bridge or construction practice, it is difficult to correlate the Florida bridge with Maine’s bridge inventory,” Talbot said.

Horizontal alignment @ Woodridge Road & Eastern Avenue

