

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## 1950s weren't so great

V. Paul Reynold's Nov. 24 column on the joy of the 1950s is typical of what can happen to someone who doesn't appreciate they are probably alive today because of so many good things we take for granted today but didn't even imagine in the '50s.

I urge my fellow aging Americans to throw away rose-colored rear view mirrors like Reynolds uses. Life is too good to be living in the past! Be thankful America is a better place today, even if we do seem to be receding because some voters wanted to return to the '50s.

Here are some things I remember from the '50s that Reynolds forgot: polio, iron lungs, metal dashboards, windshields that broke when heads hit them because there were no seatbelts. Also, Sen. Joe McCarthy and Roy Cohn (praise Margaret Chase Smith, one of the truly good things about the '50s in America, a very brave U.S. senator whose Declaration of Conscience should be read to the U.S. Senate today). There was discrimination based on race, gender, social status, competent abortions for rich women and awful substitutes for poor ones, women encouraged to stay in bad marriages, holiday travel "news" that several hundred would die on the highways, long distance telephone calls that cost so much the person receiving one assumed it was bad news, dirty rivers, cigarette smoke in every building.

Reynolds would remember we had a single, horrible enemy then called Communism, that wanted to destroy us. I spent four years in the military doing my small part to protect America from the USSR. The Republican Party is on Russia's side today!

**Robert Winship Johnston**  
*Gouldsboro*

## Fix existing roads first

Maine lacks the capital to maintain our infrastructure.

## WRITE TO US

Letters must be 200 words or fewer and include a full name, town of residence and daytime phone number. OpEds may be 650 words. Letters may be edited or rejected for clarity, taste, libel and space. If a letter or OpEd is published, submissions by the same writer will not be considered for 60 days.

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Gov. Janet Mills tasked the blue-ribbon commission, now deadlocked, to deliver a viable solution to fund infrastructure repairs without relying on annual bonding.

Since March, rising construction costs have inflated the annual shortfall for road and bridge maintenance by 46 percent (\$73.1 million) to \$232 million. Eleven projects, representing 11.6 percent of the value of projects (\$45.5 million) planned to be bid this year, were removed from the bidding schedule by May. Deferred repairs result in significantly higher costs than regular, timely repairs.

At the same time that the shortfall balloons to nearly a quarter of a billion dollars annually, the Department of Transportation is sitting on tens of millions of scarce transportation dollars for the \$79.25 million I-395/Route 9 Connector, a controversial project that fails to satisfy the DOT's original system linkage need mandate to provide a limited-access connection from I-395 to Route 9 east of Route 46.

Using the same 46 percent increase that bloated the shortfall, the connector's 2017 cost could swell from \$79.25 to \$115.71 million surpassing the benefit/cost decision point where cost outweighs benefits and thus the project's viability.

Repair work on existing roads

and bridges generates 16 percent more jobs than construction of new bridges and roads and that is where the priority must be. New projects should be suspended with the savings reallocated to fund Maine's unmet transportation needs. That's a viable solution that can start immediately. Anything short of that is disingenuous and fiscally irresponsible.

**Larry Adams**  
*Brewer*

## Sue oil companies?

In November, at an international symposium held in Portland, I listened to scientists "dive in" to the challenges facing the Gulf of Maine, one of the fastest warming bodies of water in all the world's oceans. The week-long symposium focused on sea level rise, ocean acidification and warming ocean temperatures, involved stakeholders dependent on working waterfronts and our fisheries, and began an incredibly important conversation about what the Gulf of Maine will look like in 2050 in a warmer world. We learned that there is published science tracing fossil fuel companies' contributions to the warming ocean and to sea level rise. In fact, the emissions between 1880 and 2010 from 90 companies are responsible for as much as one-third of global sea level rise.

If taxpayers are paying for coastal damages, and fishermen are forced to adapt to changing fisheries, shouldn't fossil fuel companies pay their fair share of the costs? Especially given that for almost half a century these companies have known about the harm from greenhouse gas emissions (yet continued to keep the information from the public). Rhode Island and Massachusetts are already suing oil companies for climate damages. Will Maine join them?

**Marina Cucuzza**  
*Bangor*