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MICHIGAN'S BRIDGES RANK 13TH WORST IN NATION

Repair backlog leave 1,400 bridges in critical condition, federal support is needed to maintain safety and limit repair costs.

DETROIT, MICH – Michigan ranks as the 13th worst in the nation in terms of the overall condition of the state's bridges, according to a report released today. "The Fix We're In: The State of Michigan's Bridges" finds that drivers are regularly using heavily trafficked bridges that are rated as structurally deficient.

Today, one out of every eight bridges that motorists in Michigan cross each day are likely to be deteriorating to some degree; and 13.1 percent of bridges statewide are rated "structurally deficient" by government standards, compared to 11.5 percent nationwide, according to the report authored by Transportation for America, the largest and most diverse transportation advocacy coalition in the nation.

"It is no secret that times are tough, but the most economically viable approach to fix our infrastructure is to protect the investments we've already made with needed safety and structural upgrades," said CeCe Grant, Michigan organizer for Transportation for America.

"Allowing roads and bridges to slip into disrepair ultimately costs state and local governments billions more than the cost of regular, timely repair," said Keith Ledbetter, Director of Legislative affairs, Michigan Infrastructure Transportation Association. "Putting it off can cost three times as much as fixing it now. The backlog increases safety risks, hinders economic prosperity and significantly burdens taxpayers."

Michigan's bridges are suffering the results of years of underinvestment. Without a change in federal support, it will eventually cost each driver \$226 to fix all of the structurally deficient bridges. According to the Federal Highway Administration, transportation agencies would need \$70.9 billion to overcome the current backlog of deficient bridges.

"Investing in the construction, expansion and repair of our nation's transportation infrastructure creates jobs while laying the foundation for long-term economic prosperity," said Arnold Weinfeld, Director of Strategic initiatives and Federal affairs, Michigan Municipal League. "Given our limited resources, the federal government should reward states that prioritize fix-it-first projects, like we do here in Michigan."

Regardless of the amount of wear and tear, most bridges are designed to last roughly 50 years, yet more than 185,000 highway bridges nationwide (out of 600,000 total) are already 50 years old or older. By 2030, that number could double and has the potential to triple by 2050. The average age of Michigan's bridges is 41.3 years old.

"Preserving our existing transportation system is crucial to ensuring regional prosperity, safety and a higher quality of life," said Grant. "The economic and social cost of neglect is simply too

high. It is time for our policymakers to fix our infrastructure and make sure Americans get the most bang for our transportation buck.”

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Transportation for America (T4 America) is the largest, most diverse coalition working on transportation reform today. Our nation's transportation network is based on a policy that has not been significantly updated since the 1950's. We believe it is time for a bold new vision — transportation that guarantees our freedom to move however we choose and leads to a stronger economy, greater energy security, cleaner environment and healthier America for all of us. We're calling for more responsible investment of our federal tax dollars to create a safer, cleaner, smarter transportation system that works for everyone.