



Thursday, March 15, 2012

Hawaii's Roads 3rd Worst In Nation

Study Shows Deteriorating Roads Cost Hawaii Drivers \$1,500 Annually

[Jill Kuramoto](#) KITV 4 News Reporter



HONOLULU -- A new study by a national research group shows nearly two-thirds of Hawaii's major roads are deteriorated and most of the urban roads are congested -- problems costing motorists hundreds of dollars in repairs and lost time.

While state transportation officials agree many of Hawaii's roads are in need of repair, they're calling the research slanted and saying it misrepresents information.

No one has to tell workers at Lex Brodie's Tire, Brake & Service Co. that Hawaii's roads are bad. Even before last week's storm, they've been seeing an increase in customers.

"We've seen cars coming in with damaged tires from potholes, also rims that have been damaged," said Cooper Masani, manager of the Lex Brodie's in Kakaako.

According to the Washington, D.C.- based national transportation research group, The Road Information Program, or TRIP, Honolulu's roads rank third-worst in the nation, behind San Jose and Los Angeles.

"Nearly two-thirds of Hawaii's major roads are deteriorated providing motorists a rough ride," said William Wilkins, executive director of TRIP.

The study claims the poor road conditions cost the average Hawaii motorist \$1,527 annually in the form of delays, crashes and the cost to operate a vehicle.

"This report is taking things out of context to push their own agenda," said state transportation department spokesman, Dan Meisenzahl, "an agenda that we agree with."

The state DOT says along with TRIP, it also supports the transportation bill right now being debated in Congress that provides funding for highway and transit projects nationwide.

Hawaii receives a significant amount of federal money for its transportation projects. But Meisenzahl said federal requirements and the state's strict procurement and permitting process prevents state projects from moving quickly, something Hawaii construction workers desperately want.

"Statewide, construction employment in Hawaii has declined by 12,000 (jobs), or 30 percent over the past four years," said John Romanowski, president of the Associated General Contractors of America's state chapter.

Nationally, Honolulu ranked 255th out of 337 metro areas in terms of the percentage of construction jobs lost during 2011.

Meisenzahl said the state is aware of what roads and bridges listed in the TRIP report are in need of repair and are already in the process of addressing them. However, because of time and money, it won't happen right away.

"We're not just about creating jobs, we want to create an infrastructure that will last, that will serve the people of Hawaii and hopefully cut down on time and traffic," said Meisenzahl.

Related Link: [TRIP: A National Transportation Research Group](#)