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## **Mississippi Citizens Would Be Safer, Save Money with Increased Transportation Investment, Report Says**

Additional investment into Mississippi's transportation infrastructure system would save each state taxpayer up to \$1,500 per year (for a total of \$1.6 billion in total) and greatly increase safety on the state's roadways, according to a [report](#) published this week by national transportation nonprofit TRIP.

TRIP's report shows that 28 percent of Mississippi roads are in poor or mediocre condition, a number that jumps to 68 percent when examining just the state and locally maintained urban roads in the Jackson area (and 46 percent for the Gulfport/Biloxi area). Similarly, 22 percent of the bridges across the state are "in need of repair, improvement or replacement," while 14 percent are structurally deficient and 8 percent are functionally obsolete. These congested and deteriorating roads are costing taxpayers on a very real level, as TRIP reports that the average Jackson-area driver doles out \$1,506 per year to cover the costs associated with the deteriorating infrastructure. Those roads cost the average Gulfport/Biloxi driver \$1,272 annually.

In addition to saving dollars, investment in Mississippi's transportation infrastructure could also save lives. TRIP says that an average of 728 people die each year (looking at the years 2007-2011) in traffic crashes in Mississippi. The state's traffic fatality rate of 1.62 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2011 was the fifth highest in the nation. Additional transportation investment would help to alleviate some of these incidents, TRIP said, as well as grow the economy and encourage the well-being of all across the state.

"As Mississippi looks to retain its businesses, maintain its level of economic competitiveness and achieve further economic growth, the state will need to maintain and modernize its roads, highways, and bridges by improving the physical condition of its transportation network and enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient and reliable mobility for motorists and businesses," according to the report. "Making needed improvements to Mississippi's roads, highways and bridges could also provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access."

Mississippi Department of Transportation officials say the report shows just how critical it is to invest in the state's transportation infrastructure as soon as possible.

"The TRIP report contains vital information which highlights the challenges we are up against in our transportation system," said Melinda McGrath, MDOT executive director. "It's a very important time as the state's economy begins to recover to understand the correlation between growing the economy and a well-developed, maintained statewide transportation network."

The 24-page report, "Mississippi Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," is available [here](#).