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Motorists Pay For Bad Roads

Substandard roads and bridges cost Michigan drivers approximately \$7 billion per year in the cost of wasted time and fuel, additional traffic crashes and increased vehicle maintenance costs as a result of state routes that have significant deterioration, are congested or lack adequate safety features, according to a new report recently released by The Road Information Program (TRIP), a national transportation nonprofit research organization based in Washington, D.C. The report estimates that the average cost of inadequate roadways is \$1,671 annually per driver in the Detroit metropolitan area, \$1,085 annually per driver in the Grand Rapids area, \$866 annually per driver in the Lansing area, and \$785 per urban driver living elsewhere in the state.

TRIP's study — *Paying the Price for Inadequate Roads in Michigan: The Cost to Motorists in Reduced Safety, Lost Time and Increased Vehicle Wear* — found that 38 percent of major roads in Michigan are in poor or mediocre condition and 39 percent of the state's urban highways were congested in 2006. On average, 1,235 people were killed annually in motor vehicle accidents in Michigan from 2001 through 2005.

"The TRIP report shows that Michigan's roads are costing the state's drivers lives, time and money," said William M. Wilkins, TRIP's executive director. "Repairing roads, relieving congestion and improving roadway safety in Michigan could literally save the state's motorists billions of dollars each year."

The TRIP report found that driving on roads in need of repair costs Michigan's motorists \$2.6 billion annually in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. The report also found that traffic congestion in Michigan costs licensed drivers \$2.3 billion annually in delays and wasted fuel. Traffic accidents and fatalities in which roadway design was an important factor cost Michigan motorists approximately \$2.1 billion annually, including medical costs, lost economic and household productivity, property damage, and travel delays.

"The high costs associated with Michigan's inadequate roads and bridges are a sign of an aging and overburdened roadway system that needs to be adequately maintained,

repaired and funded," Wilkins said. Additional findings of the report include the following:

- The Grand Rapids urban area has the highest share of deteriorated major roads among the state's three largest urban regions, with 34 percent of its major roads rated in poor condition in 2005. In the Detroit urban area, 32 percent of major roads are rated in poor condition and 24 percent of pavements are rated in poor condition in the Lansing urban area.
- The average rush hour trip in the Detroit area takes approximately 38 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour; 14 percent longer to complete in the Grand Rapids area than during non-rush hour; and 5 percent longer to complete in the Lansing area than during non-rush hour.
- In 2005, there were 298 traffic fatalities in the Detroit urban area, 82 traffic fatalities in the Grand Rapids urban area, and 54 traffic fatalities in the Lansing urban area.
- Annual vehicle travel in Michigan increased by 28 percent between 1990 and 2005, from 81 billion vehicle miles of travel (VMT) to 104 billion VMT. Vehicle travel in Michigan is projected to increase by another 25 percent by 2020, to 130 billion vehicle miles of travel.
- By 2030, unless additional roadway capacity is added, rush hour travel in the Detroit area will take approximately 50 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour — similar to the current traffic congestion levels in the San-Francisco-Oakland, Calif. and Washington, D.C. areas.
- By 2030, unless additional roadway capacity is added, rush hour delays will double in both the Grand Rapids and Lansing areas, with rush hour travel taking approximately 28-percent longer to complete than during non-rush hours in the Grand Rapids area and 11-percent longer to complete in the Lansing area than during non-rush hours.
- Urban traffic congestion in Michigan has increased since 2000, when 23 percent of the state's urban highways were considered congested.

Highway improvements such as adding lanes, removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, widening lanes, widening and paving shoulders, improving intersection design, and better road markings and traffic signals can reduce traffic fatalities and vehicle accidents.