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Transportation group says Louisiana's roads cost drivers billions of dollars a year

By Robbie Reynold, Reporter



BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) - A national research group based out of Washington, D.C. released a report on the quality of roads in Louisiana, and it doesn't look good, with the state ranking as one of the worst in the country.

According to that group, called TRIP, poor roads and traffic are costing drivers across the state an estimated \$6.5 billion per year. That's around \$2,500 per driver.

These costs come from crashes, car repairs, and extra money spent on gas because of frequent traffic stops.

Officials with the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) say the state legislature needs to come up with more money for road and bridge improvements.

"At the end of the day, we just can't keep delivering," said Dr. Shawn Wilson, Louisiana DOTD secretary. "If I have to close the bridge, if we can't deliver a project or construct a road, it's not because we don't desire to, it's not because we've identified it, and it's not because the industry can't deliver it. It has to do with the ability to pay for it."

Rocky Moretti, director of research and policy for TRIP, says, "It's challenged in all those areas. And typically, some states may have some bright spots. Unfortunately, that's not true in Louisiana."

DOTD is recommending that legislators raise \$700 million to repair these roadways. The legislative session begins on April 10. The Governor's Task Force recommended a plan in December that would raise the \$700 million they're requesting. That plan includes raising the gas tax, which is currently \$0.20 per gallon.

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