

## New report finds Hawaii's roads, bridges deteriorating



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By Teri Okita

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - A national, non-profit transportation group hit the road - and found nearly two-thirds of Hawaii's major highways and thoroughfares have deteriorated. If that's not a surprise to you - maybe how much the group says you're forking over because it - will be.



We didn't really need a study to tell us some of our roads are congested, in need of repair, and lack a few safety features. But you may be surprised by this: the Washington, D.C. based research group, TRIP, The Road Information Program, says the average Honolulu driver pays \$700 a year in added repair costs, higher fuel use, tire wear, and faster vehicle depreciation - all because of the shape of our roads.



"Without a significant federal increase and state and local transportation funding, Hawaii will be unable to move forward with numerous projects needed to improve traffic safety, enhance economic development opportunities, relieve traffic congestion, and improve overall conditions," says TRIP's Executive Director, Will Wilkins.



In addition, TRIP says Honolulu motorists fork over \$600 worth of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion. The report also says traffic crashes where "roadway design" may have contributed to the accident cost each driver \$200 a year. The grand total? About \$1,500 annually.

"We kind of feel like we got thrown under the bus here for them to make their point - a lot of their facts and figures, really questionable," says state Department of Transportation spokesman Dan Meisenzahl.

Meisenzahl cites that roadway design example. TRIP's report says "It's estimated that roadway design may be a contributing factor in approximately one-third of fatal crashes". That's about 30%. The DOT says it's more like 6.5%. The DOT may not agree with TRIP's methods, but the endgame is the same.

"We want more federal dollars," Meisenzahl says. "It could only help. Transportation infrastructure in Hawaii, as everywhere, is so critical."

A bill moving through Congress sets funding levels for highway and transit construction, and the Hawaii legislature is working on streamlining cumbersome permitting and procurement laws that slow projects.

TRIP's study includes county roads, not just state roads. The report also says almost half of the state's bridges need repair or replacement, but the DOT also questions that number.

The full report is available at [tripnet.org](http://tripnet.org).