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Researchers: Connecticut's interstates, bridges need a tune up

By Mark Saunders



America's most congested interstates

	State	Percent of urban interstates congested
1	California	85%
2	Maryland	75%
3	New Jersey	73%
4	Rhode Island	63%
5	Delaware	63%
6	Massachusetts	62%
7	Hawaii	60%
8	Connecticut	60%
9	Florida	59%
10	Minnesota	56%

Forget the mechanic, Connecticut is going to need a lot more to fix its bridges and roadways, according to one research group.

TRIP, a nonprofit organization that evaluates data on transportation issues, released their report "[The Interstate Highway System turns 60: Challenges to Its Ability to Continue to Save Lives, Time and Money](#)," regarding where the country's most congested roadways and structurally deficient bridges reside. Perhaps to no surprise, Connecticut was on the list. Connecticut's bridges have been a cause for concern for some time now—not just for travelers, but

lawmakers as well. Gov. Malloy's vision of modernizing the state's transportation systems has hit a budgetary wall, met with cutbacks and compromises to curtail the state's projected 2016-2017 fiscal year deficit.

And the deteriorating transportation system has been showing its age.

Connecticut was fifth among states with the most structurally deficient interstate bridges, with seven percent of all bridges deemed deficient. The state tied with Michigan and Illinois.

"Of the 56,448 bridges on the U.S. Interstate system, three percent are rated as structurally deficient and 18 percent are rated as functionally obsolete," the report stated. "While most Interstate bridges are generally in acceptable condition, a large number of these bridges are reaching an age when they will require significant repairs, and in some cases replacement."

The sheer amount of vehicles hitting the road could be a contributing factor.

Connecticut was ranked eighth among states with the most congested interstates, with an estimated 60 percent of congestion. Congestion is no surprise. According to the study, Connecticut was among the top ten states for busiest urban interstates as well with an estimated average lane mile of 15,000 vehicles on the roads.

"The continued increase in Interstate highway travel has resulted in an increase in traffic congestion levels," the report stated. "Forty-three percent of the nation's urban Interstates (8,020 of 18,567 miles) are considered congested because they carry traffic levels that result in delays during peak travel hours."

Gov. Malloy originally called for a number of projects to improve the state's aging transportation infrastructure. Some projects in the 30-year plan were projects for Interstate 95 between Stamford and Bridgeport, and Metro-North New Haven Line bridge repairs and upgrades to speed and capacity.