



Transportation group grades NY's highway system among nation's worst

By Alex Crichton • 06/28/2016

A group that includes representatives from the engineering, construction and highway industries has issued a new report on the nation's Interstate Highway System, calling it an aging and underfunded network of roads and bridges. The report from the Washington, D.C.-based transportation research group TRIP comes as the U.S. Interstate marks its 60th anniversary this week.

Carolyn Kelly is Associate Director of Research and Communications for TRIP. She said the report includes some bad news for New York.



"Like many 60-year-olds, the interstate system is beginning to show its age, and so we're seeing deterioration as is the case in New York State, as well as increasing crowding and congestion because we're seeing unprecedented levels of travel on the interstate, particularly by large trucks," she said. "Seventeen percent of the state's interstates are in poor or mediocre condition, which ranks you tenth in the nation among all the states, and then eight percent of all interstate bridges are structurally deficient, and that is the fourth highest rate in the nation."

The TRIP report quotes a U.S. Department of Transportation report that states that the current backlog in needed improvements on the nation's Interstate Highway System is estimated to be \$189 billion. The backlog includes \$59 billion needed to improve pavement conditions, \$30 billion to improve bridges and \$100 billion for needed system expansion and enhancement.

"These latest figures from TRIP are beyond disappointing and should serve as a wakeup call to policymakers at all levels of government. Thankfully, this year's state budget did include funding parity for upstate roads and bridges. But it's not enough," said Heather Briccetti, president and CEO of the Business Council of New York State. "Statistics show that every dollar spent on infrastructure investment returns three to the overall economy. We need to increase our infrastructure investment and we need to do it now," she said.

Greg Biryła, executive director of Unshackle Upstate, said a safe, efficient and reliable network of roads and bridges is essential to the economic future and public safety of Upstate New York.