

TRIP: Poor roads cost Louisiana motorists additional \$6.5 billion

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A report from the national transportation research group TRIP finds Louisiana drivers are paying an additional \$6.5 billion annually because of poor transportation infrastructure.

Research and Policy Manager Rocky Moretti says deteriorating roads, congestion, and lack of safety features are leading to increased costs for motorists.

“In the cost of driving on rough roads, which is beating up their vehicles, the cost of traffic congestion, which is slowing down their ability to get places when they need to get there including getting home in the evening, and the cost of traffic crashes,” Moretti said.

Moretti says Louisiana has the 7th highest rate of traffic fatalities in the country. The report finds traffic accidents claimed the lives of more than 3,500 between 2011 and 2015. He says adding roadway safety features could greatly reduce that rate.

“When rumble strips are put on highways, when turn lanes are added to busy intersections, when there’s good lighting, lanes markings are kept up to speed, we see a tremendous reduction in serious and fatal traffic crashes,” Moretti said.

Moretti says the absence of these features may not cause accidents, but it can contribute to the seriousness of them. TRIP finds 13 percent of the state’s bridges are structurally deficient, and 26 percent of major roads are in poor condition. He says Louisiana didn’t get into this problem overnight, and it can’t be resolved overnight either.

“It now faces the challenge of addressing economic development and traffic congestion, of improving road and bridge condition, and at the same time improving roadway safety,” Moretti said.