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## Mainers to decide fate of Maine's transportation, infrastructure systems

### *WMTW News 8 takes closer look at Question 3*

PORTLAND, Maine —Question 3 on the November ballot deals with transportation and infrastructure.

It asks Mainers if they support a \$100 million bond to improve roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

Passing the bond would trigger more than \$150 million in matching federal and other funds for a total of more than half-billion dollars.

The Maine Department of Transportation's wish list spans the state, and while the state is supposed to pay for these repairs, lawmakers in Augusta have been coming up short in recent years.

Now, they want voters to OK the bonding, or borrowing, of \$100 million.

The bridge over the Presumpscot River, in Westbrook; River Road, in Windham; Interstate 295 from Portland to Falmouth; and Mount Vernon Avenue, in Augusta are just a few of the hundreds of transportation projects the state has on its plate.

"We can put off doing the work, but it won't go away," said Tom Gorrill, president of the Maine Better Transportation Association.

Gorrill said voters should vote yes on Question 3 on Tuesday to approve the \$100 million bond to improve Maine's crumbling infrastructure because now is the perfect time to borrow.

"The interest rates on the bonds are very low. We'll probably never see them that low in our lifetime again," Gorrill said.

Proponents said the bond and matching funds will support or create hundreds of construction jobs.

Gorrill is the president of an engineering consulting company but told WMTW News 8's Paul Merrill that supporting Question 3 is not about personal gain.

"It's not about trying to get work for anybody; it's about meeting the needs that are identified through a variety of studies," Gorrill said.

One of those studies was discussed in Portland on Thursday.

Transportation advocacy group **TRIP** identified Maine's top 50 transportation challenges.

No. 3 on the list is U.S. Route 302 in Portland.

Still, some lawmakers said the state simply can't keep borrowing money.

"I have nothing against the projects themselves -- just the idea of bonding at this time," said Rep. Eleanor Espling, R-New Gloucester.

Responding to those concerns, Maine State Chamber of Commerce President Dana Connors said that historically, Maine has been prudent when it comes to borrowing.

"We recognize that there is an investment that we need to make in our people, as well as our industries. If jobs are to be created, this is a tremendous stimulus-type of opportunity for us," said Connors.

The governor's office is expected to weigh in on some of the bonding issues on Monday.