

Transportation chief sounds the alarm

FRONT PAGE

Comes on heels of bridge closure in North Jersey

ASSOCIATED PRESS



EDISON – In the wake of the partial closure of a heavily traveled bridge in northern New Jersey this week, Transportation Commissioner Jamie Fox warned Thursday that the state’s failing roads and bridges cost

drivers billions of dollars as the state is running out of money to repair them.

Fox outlined his concerns alongside the release of a report from the nonprofit Washington, D.C.-based research group TRIP.

TRIP’s report says New Jersey’s roads cost drivers \$11.8 billion a year because of higher operating costs, delays and congestion, and accidents.

The report also says 35 percent of New Jersey’s roads are in poor condition while 36 percent of bridges need repair or replacement.

Fox said the transportation trust fund will be “broke” by July 1.

The report came after the partial closure of a bridge that leads to the Lincoln Tunnel this week because of cracks in its support structure. Two other bridges have also recently been closed, one in Franklin and another in Dover.

Fox also ordered the review of nearly 600 structurally deficient bridges in the state this week.

The trust fund brings in about \$1.2 billion in revenue, but those funds pay down the program’s debt, while new projects are paid for through bonding and cash infusions from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

By July 1, the authority to pay for new projects runs out. Leaders in the Democrat-controlled Legislature have called for raising more revenues — including through increasing the state’s 14.5-cent gasoline tax. But no plan has gained enough support to be enacted.

Gov. Chris Christie has opposed tax increases but has said all options are on the table. His appointment last year of Fox, who served under Democratic administrations, was viewed as a sign the governor might be willing to compromise with Democrats.

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How to Help
Donations to Project Sleeping Bag
Project Sleeping Bag is a program that provides sleeping bags and blankets to the homeless. It is a program of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. For more information, visit www.portauthoritynynj.org.

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