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Bad roads, traffic cost average New Jersey driver \$2,000 a year, report says



Traffic backs up on Interstate 78 in Bloomsbury after a crash in 2013. Traffic, crashes and poor road conditions result in an average cost of \$2,000 a year for each New Jersey driver, according to national transportation research group TRIP. (Matt Smith / lehighvalleylive.com)



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All that time in traffic adds up.

So does hitting those potholes. And car crashes obviously can be expensive.

In all, it costs New Jersey drivers \$11.8 billion a year -- almost \$2,000 each on average, according to a report issued Thursday by nonprofit national transportation research group TRIP.

And without money for improvements, it won't get better, the researchers say.

"These conditions are only going to get worse if greater funding is not made available at the local, state and federal levels," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.

The \$1,951 average loss for each driver comes from what the report calls vehicle operating costs -- including depreciation, fuel consumption and repairs -- along with traffic delays and crashes.

[In 2013, TRIP looked at congestion in the Lehigh Valley](#) and determined traffic costs individual drivers as much as \$2,600 annually, depending on their route.

A better infrastructure could improve the New Jersey's economy, Thursday's report said, because "traffic congestion robs commuters of time and money and imposes increased costs on businesses, shippers and manufacturers, which are often passed along to the consumer."

Here are some of the report's findings for New Jersey, by the numbers:

- **589:** The average number of traffic fatalities annually from 2008 to 2012.
- **36:** The percentage of bridges in need of repair, improvement or replacement.
- **35:** The percentage of major roads in poor condition.
- **\$423 billion:** The dollar amount of goods shipped from New Jersey sites; 72 percent are carried by trucks.
- **\$5.2 billion:** The total annual cost to residents for time lost and fuel wasted in traffic, an average loss of \$861 per driver.

See more of the report's findings [on the TRIP website](#).