

State transportation secretary: 'We have a congestion emergency'

by Joy Lambert | Thursday, 21st 2019



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BALTIMORE (WBFF) - There is a congestion emergency on Maryland roads, and National Transportation Research Group, TRIP, reports it's only going to get worse.

According to the TRIP report, the average driver in Baltimore loses 50 hours to congestion each year and \$1,200 in lost time and wasted fuel.

Pete Ron, Maryland's Secretary of Transportation, said: "We have a congestion emergency within the state that we have to treat as an emergency."

According to the TRIP report, the average daily commute for Maryland residents is 32.7 minutes. It is the second longest time, behind only New York at 33 minutes.

The TRIP report released Thursday, finds that Maryland has the busiest highways and roads in the nation, carrying the highest daily traffic per land mile in the nation.

Ron says they're only going to get worse.

"By 2040, we're going to see an additional 70 percent of congestion in Maryland if we do not act. It is the governor's opinion, and my opinion, that we cannot afford to not act. We cannot afford to not treat this as an emergency."

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration is working to implement a plan to relieve congestion that includes new express toll lanes on I-270 and 495, improved use of lanes on the 695 Beltway from I-70 up to Route 43/White Marsh Boulevard, and investing in smart signals to allow better traffic flow on non-highways.

"We have to act decisively, as Gov. Hogan has called for, and we have available to us those tools necessary to reduce the congestion we're dealing with," Ron said.

The governor is proposing a \$17.8 billion congestion relief plan. MDOT is asking the Legislature to move those plans forward.