WASHINGTON (WPRI) — A report released Tuesday by TRIP — a national transportation research nonprofit — says the safety and condition of the nation’s rural roads and bridges are in need of immediate improvements.

“The importance of the rural transportation system as the backbone of the nation’s energy, food and fiber supply chain has been heightened during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” the nonprofit wrote in a news release.

According to TRIP, Rhode Island ranks first in the nation in the rate of rural roads in poor condition and rural bridges that are rated poor/structurally deficient, and sixth in fatality rates on non-interstate, rural roads.

TRIP’s report found 41% of Rhode Island’s rural roads are in poor condition and 29% are in mediocre condition while 22% percent of the state’s rural bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition.

Fixing the nation’s rural transportation challenges will require a significant increase in money, however, TRIP says the large decrease in travel due to COVID-19 is estimated to reduce state transportation revenues by at least 30% (approximately $50 billion) over the next 18 months.

Read the full report »