

Report: Massachusetts' urban interstate congestion and bridge deterioration among highest in U.S.

By [MARIE SZANISZLO](#) | Boston Herald

Massachusetts has some of the nation's worst bridges and highest rates of vehicle travel and congestion, according to a new report.

The report by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit, found that 7% of Massachusetts' urban interstate bridges were in poor or structurally deficient condition — the fourth highest percentage, just after West Virginia's 13%, Rhode Island's 12% and Illinois' 8%.

“Maintaining safe bridges is a critical public safety issue; therefore, the federal government requires all bridges in the United States to be inspected every two years,” said Abbie Goodman, executive director of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts also had the sixth-most congested interstates — just behind California, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware and Florida, consecutively — with 68% of its urban interstates experiencing congestion during peak commuting hours, according to the report, “America's Interstate Highway System at 65: Meeting America's Transportation Needs with a Reliable, Safe & Well-Maintained National Highway Network.”

And the number of vehicles being carried per urban interstate lane mile was 16,326, the eighth highest in the nation, the report said. California topped the category at 20,957.

“As the TRIP report makes clear, the need for accelerated investment in Massachusetts infrastructure is urgent,” said Mary Maguire, AAA Northeast director of public and legislative affairs. “A safe and well-maintained interstate highway system will strengthen the U.S. economy, enhance mobility and facilitate more efficient movement of goods, but the future of this network could be jeopardized without increased federal investment.”

AAA Northeast urges Congress and the administration to prioritize transportation investments and improvements to roads and bridges to ensure safe, efficient and reliable mobility in Massachusetts, Maguire said.

“MassDOT's number one priority continues to be ensuring roads and bridges are safe for all users,” the department's spokeswoman, Jacquelyn Goddard, said in an email.

The transportation bond bill that Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law in February “has \$7.6 billion in authorized spending for bridges and municipal and state pavement,” Goddard said, “and MassDOT has \$1.4 billion in Fiscal Year 2022 capital investment program funding for highway and bridge asset improvements and maintenance.”