



WYOMING

Wyoming Road Safety Faces Significant Funding Shortfall as One-Third of State Roads Deteriorate in 2025

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Wyoming's Roads at a Crossroads: Report Reveals Stark Funding Gap

One in three miles of state-maintained roadway in Wyoming is currently in poor condition, according to a fresh analysis released this week by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based transportation research nonprofit. The findings, detailed in the organization's report titled "Keeping Wyoming Mobile: The Most Needed Improvements to Provide a Safe, Reliable, Well-Maintained Transportation System in the Equality State," underscore a growing crisis that state officials have warned about for months. As construction costs continue to outpace available funding, the safety and reliability of Wyoming's transportation network face increasing strain—with real consequences for drivers, freight haulers, and rural communities alike.

The report's release comes at a pivotal moment. Just days ago, Wyoming lawmakers once again rejected a proposal to increase the state's fuel tax, a measure that transportation officials have repeatedly cited as a straightforward path to closing the widening budget gap. Despite WYDOT's repeated warnings that its projected deficit has ballooned to approximately \$600 million—up from an earlier estimate of \$411 million—the legislature has struggled to find consensus on revenue solutions. This legislative impasse leaves the department in what Director Darin Westby has described as a "preservation mode," forcing difficult trade-offs between maintenance, safety upgrades, and long-term infrastructure resilience.

"Resources for the actual construction of those projects currently are lacking," said Rocky Moretti, TRIP's director of policy and research, during a briefing on the report's findings.

"Since 2022, the state has seen a 52% increase in highway construction costs, which has severely eroded the purchasing power of existing funds."

That erosion is visible in the data: while 33% of major roadways were rated poor in 2025, the report projects that figure could rise

to 37% by 2028 without intervention. Bridges are not faring better—7% are already classified as structurally deficient, a rating that signals significant deterioration in decks or supports and raises urgent safety concerns, particularly on high-traffic corridors like I-80 and I-25.

The human and economic stakes are not abstract. Wyoming's transportation system moves more than just commuters—it carries energy products, agricultural goods, and tourism traffic that are vital to the state's economy. Over 7,000 miles of road and 2,000 bridges fall under WYDOT's jurisdiction, many of them serving remote areas where alternate routes simply do not exist. When a bridge deteriorates or a roadway becomes unsafe, the impact is felt immediately by school buses, emergency responders, and truck drivers hauling livestock or equipment across vast distances. In a state where geographic isolation amplifies the importance of reliable infrastructure, deferred maintenance isn't just an inconvenience—it can become a matter of access and equity.

Critics of increased taxation argue that Wyoming residents already face enough financial pressure and that alternative funding mechanisms—such as prioritizing federal grants or reallocating existing state funds—should be explored first. Some lawmakers have pointed to recent federal infrastructure investments as reason for optimism, noting that initiatives like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law have unlocked new opportunities for rural states. Although, TRIP's report tempers that optimism with a sobering reality check: of the 25 highest-priority transportation projects identified across Wyoming, only three currently have construction funding secured. The remainder, including a \$500 million effort to reconstruct and redesign the I-80/I-25 interchange in Cheyenne, remain stalled despite completed design phases.

This funding gap is not occurring in a vacuum. Historically, Wyoming has relied heavily on fuel taxes and federal contributions to maintain its roads, but inflation, improved vehicle fuel efficiency, and shifting travel patterns have diminished the effectiveness of those traditional revenue streams over time. Not since the transportation funding reforms of the early 2000s has the state faced such a sustained mismatch between system needs and available resources. What makes the current moment particularly pressing is the convergence of rising costs, aging infrastructure, and legislative stalemate—all occurring as climate extremes place additional stress on pavement and bridge integrity.

The path forward remains uncertain. While WYDOT continues to engage lawmakers and advocate for solutions—including the much-debated fuel tax increase—there is no guarantee that the upcoming budget session will yield different results. For now, the state's roads endure under increasing strain, their condition a quiet but growing testament to the cost of inaction. As Moretti noted in the report's conclusion, the challenge is not merely financial; it is about preserving the safety, reliability, and quality of a transportation system that connects every corner of the Equality State.