

## Transportation officials urge state lawmakers to fund deteriorating roads as federal funding expires

By [Matthew Mondschein](#) - September 11, 2026



A semi trailer heads north on Interstate 25 near Wagon Mound, New Mexico, in April 2022. State lawmakers were informed about the state's poor road infrastructure and mounting costs to fix them on Sep. 10, 2026. (Patrick Lohmann/Source NM)

National transportation analysts, joined by a state transportation department official and contractors, told lawmakers this week that while they have identified improvements for the state's substandard roads, they lack sufficient funding to make the repairs.

According to a 2026 [report](#) by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit, 56% of all major locally and state-maintained roads in New Mexico are in "poor or mediocre condition." Driving on rough roads costs the average New Mexico driver \$1,043 annually in additional vehicle operating costs — a total of \$1.6 billion statewide, according to the report.

National analysts told state lawmakers during the Legislature's interim Transportation Infrastructure Revenue Subcommittee on Thursday that the New Mexico Department of Transportation identified \$7.5 billion in needed projects to address the problem.

"These are projects that have been scoped out. There has been some planning undertaken, but quite simply, the funding is not there," TRIP Director of Policy and Research Rocky Moretti said.

In June, NMDOT officials dished out [hundreds of millions](#) of dollars through bond sales for state transportation infrastructure repair, as part of a [bill](#) signed into law by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in February.

But the current funding gap remains nearly six times higher than in 2017, when NMDOT identified \$1.3 billion in needed but unfunded projects, according to the report.

Sen. Larry Scott (R-Hobbs) asked the transportation panel if the failures listed in the report were "sudden, catastrophic and unanticipated," or if they were due to lawmakers not "anticipating the need for repair" as New Mexico's roads continued to get worse.

"It was definitely the latter," Jim Garcia, the executive director of Associated Contractors of New Mexico, answered.

While lack of funding for New Mexico's road infrastructure [has been ongoing](#), costs are projected to increase while some key funding already in place is set to expire. The Infrastructure and Jobs Act, signed into law in 2021, provided \$2.5 billion in federal dollars to New Mexico over five years for road and bridge investments. The funding expires Sep. 30.

And due to inflation, more funding covers less work. From 2022 to 2025, the Federal Highway Administration's highway construction [cost index](#) increased by 45%.

Transportation officials noted that long-term transportation funding modelled after Texas and Arizona would also help. Arizona passed a [five-year plan](#) in 2026 that set aside \$11 billion for road, bridge and airport investment.

Garcia told lawmakers that the "ideal path" would be for New Mexico to make a similar long-term funding plan, indexed to the Consumer Price Index to account for inflation.

Another benefit of long-term funding plans, Garcia noted, is that NMDOT and the contractor community are able to anticipate and accommodate projects years in advance.

"We need the money to do this. We have the capacity and money to build it. We just need the path to make it happen," Garcia said.