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**CONGESTION COSTS LEHIGH VALLEY COMMUTERS \$410 MILLION ANNUALLY IN LOST TIME AND FUEL. NEW REPORT IDENTIFIES AREA'S MOST EXPENSIVE COMMUTES AND CALCULATES YEARLY AND WEEKLY COST PER MOTORIST – AS MUCH AS \$2,600 PER DRIVER ANNUALLY**

*Eds.: TRIP has also produced companion reports that identify the worst commutes and calculate the cost of congestion in Harrisburg-York-Lancaster, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.*

**Allentown, PA** – Driving on congested Lehigh Valley roads costs area commuters a total of \$410 million each year – as much as \$2,600 annually per driver depending on which route they travel. A new report released today by [TRIP](http://tripnet.org) identifies the most expensive congested corridors in the Lehigh Valley in terms of lost time and wasted fuel and outlines a comprehensive set of strategies to help relieve traffic congestion and enhance transportation reliability in the region. The TRIP report also calculates the yearly and weekly costs per motorist of driving on each of the region's congested corridors that are most expensive to daily commuters. Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion while improving road and bridge conditions, boosting safety, and supporting long-term economic growth in Pennsylvania. TRIP is a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

According to the report, "[\*The Region's Most Expensive Commutes: Congested Corridors in the Lehigh Valley Area and the Steps Needed to Relieve Traffic Congestion\*](#)," local commuters experience the highest levels of congestion on the following corridors:

1. **Route 22 from I-78 to Route 33 in the Lehigh Valley.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 143 hours, 61 additional gallons of gas, and \$2,639 annually or \$51 weekly.
2. **US 422 from Morwood Avenue to Woodside Avenue in Reading.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 45 hours, 19 additional gallons of gas, and \$829 annually or \$16 weekly.
3. **US 222 from Dries Road to the Lehigh County Line in Reading.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 42 hours, 18 additional gallons of gas, and \$767 annually or \$15 weekly.
4. **Cedar Crest Boulevard from Route 22 to Chestnut Street in the Lehigh Valley.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 40 hours, 17 additional gallons of gas, and \$736 annually or \$14 weekly.
5. **State Route 12 from I-376 Elizabeth Avenue to SR 622 in Reading.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 21 hours, nine additional gallons of gas, and \$384 annually or seven dollars weekly.
6. **US 422 from Monocacy Creek Road to Pottstown Bypass in Reading.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 18 hours, seven additional gallons of gas, and \$322 annually or six dollars weekly.

7. **State Hill Road from SR 625 to SR 422 in Reading.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 17 hours, seven additional gallons of gas, and \$307 annually or six dollars weekly.
8. **State Hill Road from SR 3422 to SR 3055 in Reading.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 17 hours, seven additional gallons of gas, and \$307 annually or six dollars weekly.
9. **Route 191 from Route 22 to Route 946 in the Lehigh Valley.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 17 hours, seven additional gallons of gas, and \$307 annually or six dollars weekly.
10. **Mauch Chunk Road from Schadt Ave. to Route 22 in the Lehigh Valley.** This congested corridor costs the average rush hour driver 15 hours, six additional gallons of gas, and \$276 annually or five dollars weekly.

In total, traffic congestion in the Lehigh Valley results in the use of an additional 8.5 million gallons of fuel and the loss of 19 million hours annually. TRIP calculated each route's traffic congestion delay based on data provided by PennDOT on the average time it takes to travel each corridor during peak hours and during non-congested periods. To estimate the amount of time and fuel lost annually by commuters traveling on these segments, TRIP compared travel times during rush hour and non-congested periods.

"Increasing congestion is robbing commuters of time and money at a time when many can ill afford it. Without a significant investment in Pennsylvania's transportation system, drivers will continue to waste time and fuel, businesses will lose their competitive edge and quality of life will be diminished," said Jason Wagner, managing director of the Pennsylvania Highway Information Association (PHIA).

[The Pennsylvania Governor's Transportation Funding Advisory Commission](#) found that Pennsylvania currently needs to spend an additional \$552 million annually on projects to relieve traffic congestion. By 2030 the annual funding shortfall for needed congestion relief projects is expected to increase to approximately \$1.4 billion annually, based on current funding. These projects include improved traffic management, improved traffic signalization and providing additional road and highway capacity.

"Congested roadways limit opportunities for employment, economic growth, education, recreation and social opportunities. Relieving congestion will require increased transportation funding and a comprehensive approach that includes expanding the capacity of the state's transportation system, improving the efficiency of the existing system and offering alternatives for some peak-hour trips," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP.