



3000 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 208 • Washington, DC 20008 • Phone: (202) 466-6706 • [tripnet.org](http://tripnet.org)

**For immediate release**

**Wednesday, May 29, 2013**

**Report available at: [www.tripnet.org](http://www.tripnet.org)**

**Contact: [Frank Moretti](#) (202) 262-0714 (cell)**

**[Carolyn Bonifas Kelly](#) (703) 801-9212 (cell)**

**TRIP office (202) 466-6706**

**DEFICIENT ROADWAYS COST EACH LEHIGH VALLEY-READING DRIVER NEARLY \$1,400 ANNUALLY, A TOTAL OF \$9.4 BILLION STATEWIDE. COSTS WILL RISE AND TRANSPORTATION WOES WILL WORSEN WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT FUNDING BOOST**

*Eds.: The report includes regional pavement condition, congestion and highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for Harrisburg-York-Lancaster, Lehigh Valley-Reading, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.*

**Reading, PA** – Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost Pennsylvania motorists a total of \$9.4 billion statewide –nearly \$1,400 annually per driver in the Lehigh Valley-Reading area - due to higher vehicle operating costs (VOC), traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road and bridge conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in Pennsylvania, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, “[Future Mobility in Pennsylvania: The Cost of Meeting the State’s Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility](#),” finds that throughout Pennsylvania, 37 percent of major roads and highways provide motorists with a rough ride. A total of 42 percent of Pennsylvania bridges show significant deterioration or do not meet current design standards. The state’s major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with drivers wasting increasing amounts of time and fuel. And Pennsylvania’s rural non-interstate traffic fatality rate is significantly higher than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state.

Driving on deficient roads costs the average driver in the Lehigh Valley-Reading area driver \$1,355 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the cost of traffic crashes in which roadway features likely were a contributing factor. The TRIP report calculated the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in Pennsylvania’s largest urban areas: Harrisburg-York-Lancaster, Lehigh Valley-Reading, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area along with a statewide total is below.

Location	VOC	Congestion	Safety	TOTAL
Harrisburg-York-Lancaster	\$ 358	\$ 958	\$ 330	\$ 1,646
Lehigh Valley-Reading	\$ 420	\$ 656	\$ 279	\$ 1,355
Philadelphia	\$ 572	\$ 1,018	\$ 208	\$ 1,798
Pittsburgh	\$ 432	\$ 826	\$ 160	\$ 1,418
Scranton/Wilkes-Barre	\$ 539	\$ 437	\$ 344	\$ 1,320
<b>Pennsylvania - Statewide Total</b>	<b>\$3 Billion</b>	<b>\$3.7 Billion</b>	<b>\$2.7 Billion</b>	<b>\$9.4 Billion</b>

The TRIP report finds that a total of 52 percent of major roads in the Lehigh Valley-Reading urban area are in either poor or mediocre condition. Traffic congestion in the Lehigh Valley-Reading area is worsening, causing 30 annual hours of delay for the average motorists. The average Lehigh Valley-Reading driver wastes an average of 14 gallons of fuel each year due to congestion.

“As the General Assembly looks at a transportation funding measure, there’s a lot of discussion about the cost,” said Jason Wagner, managing director of the Pennsylvania Highway Information Association (PHIA). “The TRIP report quantifies the cost of *not* addressing this problem, and that cost is almost three times greater than the \$3.5 billion annual transportation funding gap. Of even greater concern is the safety threat that a deficient transportation system represents, especially in Pennsylvania’s rural areas.”

According to the TRIP report, 25 percent of Pennsylvania’s bridges are structurally deficient, meaning there is significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports, or other major components. Pennsylvania has the highest share of structurally deficient bridges in the nation. These bridges are often posted for lower weight or are closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including commercial trucks, school buses and emergency service vehicles. An additional 17 percent of the state’s bridges are functionally obsolete. These bridges no longer meet current highway design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment with the approaching road. Bridges that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete are safe for travel and are monitored regularly by the organizations responsible for maintaining them.

Traffic crashes in Pennsylvania claimed the lives of 1,286 people in 2011. The traffic fatality rate in 2011 on Pennsylvania’s non-Interstate rural roads was 2.33 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, nearly two-and-a-half times higher than the 0.95 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel on all other roads and highways in the state. A disproportionate share of highway fatalities occur on Pennsylvania’s rural, non-Interstate roads. In 2011, 45 percent of traffic fatalities in Pennsylvania occurred on rural, non-Interstate routes, while only 25 percent of vehicle travel in the state occurred on these roads.

“Addressing Pennsylvania’s needs for a safe, efficient and well-maintained transportation system will require a significant investment boost at the federal and state levels. But not addressing the state’s need for an improved transportation system will result in even greater costs to the public,” said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP.