

FROM: Transportation California

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This report is available at www.tripnet.org and www.transportationca.com

CALIFORNIA'S INTERSTATE SYSTEM IS SHOWING ITS AGE AT 50

- Transportation California says State's commitment to mobility and goods movement will help revive the system

SACRAMENTO – JUNE 29, 2006 – California's ultimate baby boomer, the Interstate Highway System, turns 50 today.

For the last five decades, California's Interstate Highway System has been the most critical link in the state's transportation network, saving Californians \$99.3 billion annually-- \$2,766 per person--in safety benefits, saved time, reduced fuel and lower consumer costs, according to a report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group.

Enhanced safety is a major benefit of the Interstate Highway System, which was engineered to make travel safer. The report, "Saving Lives, Time and Money," found that the Interstate system has saved 25,000 lives in California since 1956 and an average of 550 lives per year over the last 10 years. The annual savings in reduced healthcare costs and other costs associated with lost productivity to traffic crashes total \$3.16 billion statewide -- \$88 per person.

But the benefits are now eroding because California has been unable to keep up with the extreme wear and tear and growing traffic congestion on its complex system of Interstate routes and other highways. Travel is increasing at a rate five times faster than Interstate capacity has been added. Today, 75 percent of California's urban Interstates are considered congested.

“The Interstate Highways, like a lot of Californians born after World War II, are facing a number of health problems that need to be addressed--sooner rather than later,” said Doug Aadland, chairman of Transportation California.

But with population, annual miles traveled and commerce continuing to grow, California’s budgets have been stressed to maintain the system of 2,458 miles and 3,761 bridges: 38 percent of state Interstate highways are rated in poor or mediocre condition, and a quarter of the state’s bridges are rated deficient. California has the fifth greatest percentages of deficient bridges in the country.

Is a transportation angioplasty in California’s future?

“The TRIP report gives an indication of how much we stand to lose in time, dollars and opportunity if we don’t get people moving on the system again,” Aadland said. “Not addressing the chronic problems of limited capacity and system deterioration will have serious consequences to our economic health.”

Although the new state budget commits significantly more dollars to transportation this coming year, the state faces more than \$100 billion in unfunded transportation needs over the next 20 years. Existing funding does not meet current needs. The cost of maintenance and rehabilitation on the aging system is so great, it consumes all the revenue from the federal and state gasoline taxes.

System improvements are now funded by Proposition 42, the sales tax on gasoline which voters overwhelmingly approved in 2002. Although Proposition 42 is fully funded this year, and will be next year, the funds were withheld in past years because of the state’s fiscal crisis.

“California needs to fix Proposition 42 and secure that money for transportation,” Aadland said. “The state urgently needs additional funds to catch up on all the years we didn’t

have the money to spend on transportation. That pattern of underfunding is ruining our 50-year investment in mobility,” Aadland said.

“This November, California voters have the opportunity to change the state’s spending patterns and make a down payment on the future,” he said. Proposition 1-A will fix the loophole in Proposition 42, and Proposition 1-B will authorize \$19.9 billion in bonds for transportation programs.

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- Without the Interstates, Californians would waste time and fuel on the road, and pay higher prices for basic services. TRIP estimates the Interstates save Californians \$1,493 annually (\$53.57 billion statewide) in reduced consumer costs for apparel, food, housing and transportation. [See the TRIP report, pages 20-25, for a complete breakout of benefits and the methodology of calculating savings.]
- Because it reduces travel times and provides more direct routes, the Interstate system saves each California resident 74 hours of travel time annually--2.7 billion hours statewide. California’s Interstate system annually reduces statewide motor fuel consumption by 1.3 billion gallons. The savings in time and fuel amount to \$42.6 billion each year.
- California’s Interstate system, which includes four percent of all roadway lane miles in the state, carries 27 percent of all vehicle travel in the state. [See pages 11-17 for facts and figures on California’s Interstate highways and pages 26-28 for facts and figures about projected growth in travel, trade and congestion.]
- Since Interstate construction began in 1956, total vehicle miles of travel in California increased by 457 percent, the number of vehicles in the state has increased by 380 percent and California’s population has increased by 163 percent. [See page 13-15 for more travel trends.]
- See pages 26-31 for details on funding needs and shortfalls.

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Transportation California is a collaboration of business, labor and government organizations interested in promoting sound transportation policies.