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DRIVING ON DEFICIENT ROADS COSTS EACH BUFFALO DRIVER MORE THAN \$1,000 PER YEAR; BOOST IN STATE AND FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING NEEDED TO MODERNIZE ROADS AND BRIDGES TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY AND PROVIDE CONGESTION RELIEF

Buffalo, New York – The average Buffalo driver loses \$1,015 each year as a result of driving on roads that lack some desirable safety features, have poor pavement conditions or have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands. In total, New York State motorists lose \$16.4 billion each year due to traffic crashes, additional vehicle operating costs and congestion-related delays, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The report, *“Future Mobility in New York: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility,”* finds that nearly one-third of major roads in the Buffalo area are deteriorated. Twelve percent of major roads in the area are rated in poor condition, and an additional 19 percent are rated in mediocre condition. In addition to deteriorated road conditions, 24 percent of Buffalo area bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Twenty-five percent of Buffalo’s urban highways are considered congested, costing area drivers 11 hours each year due to congestion-related delays. Eighty-four people were killed in 2008 on Buffalo area roads, giving the region a traffic fatality rate of 7.4 fatalities per 100,000 population.

“In order to improve the state’s transportation system, ease the burden on drivers, and kick start New York’s economy, transportation investment must be a priority at the state and federal level,” said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. “Without adequate investment, many critically needed transportation projects will remain stranded on the drawing board.”

The TRIP report finds that New York State faces a transportation funding shortfall of approximately \$87 billion from 2010 to 2030. The challenge of meeting this transportation funding shortfall will be exacerbated by growing debt repayments for funds borrowed to fund road, highway and bridge repairs in the state. Nearly half (49 percent) of the revenue going into the New York State Highway and Bridge Dedicated Trust Fund is currently being used to pay off debt. By 2013, debt service is expected to consume 72 percent of the State Highway and Bridge

Dedicated Trust Fund's incoming revenues. State transportation funds are also being diverted away from making needed road and bridge improvements. From state fiscal years 1993-1994 to 2008-2009, 35 percent of disbursements from the New York State Highway and Bridge Dedicated Trust Fund were spent on capital construction projects – the funds used to repair and improve the state's roads and bridges. By 2013, the share of the New York State Highway and Bridge Dedicated Trust Fund going to capital construction projects is expected to decline to 21 percent.

"The TRIP report's findings on Buffalo Niagara's deteriorating infrastructure reinforces the fact that transportation funding is a pressing need," said Andrew J. Rudnick, president and CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership. "Dilapidated infrastructure threatens not only our region's drivers but our position as a strategic gateway for over \$75 billion in goods crossing our bi-national bridges annually. Investment in roads, highways and bridges is vital to Upstate economic development and directly creates jobs. It should be a top priority for Albany."

A 2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.

"New York's roads, bridges and transit systems are deteriorating. We are burdened with a struggling economy, and we desperately need to develop sound, long-term solutions," said Tom Chestnut, president and CEO of AAA Western and Central New York. "Our nation's transportation system has been taken for granted and neglected. Because of this, we face a growing barrier to America's competitiveness in the global economy. This means fewer jobs for New Yorkers, less revenue for our state, and less opportunity for our future."

Doug May, chairman of the FAIR Committee of Western New York, said, "For the past year, FAIR has been leading the charge in the Western New York region highlighting the inadequacy of funding for our roads and bridges. TRIP has now quantified the actual costs to motorists in terms of time, dollars and safety. Every driver needs to take this report to heart and communicate with their elected officials that their pocketbook and safety are at risk. It is time for the State of New York to develop a long term, adequately funded plan that will repair and improve our roads and bridges before a human tragedy takes place."