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DRIVING ON DEFICIENT ROADS COSTS EACH SYRACUSE DRIVER NEARLY \$900 PER YEAR; BOOST IN STATE AND FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING NEEDED TO MODERNIZE ROADS AND BRIDGES TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY AND PROVIDE CONGESTION RELIEF

Syracuse, New York – The average Syracuse driver loses \$860 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 Syracuse area are deteriorated. Sixteen percent of major roads in the area are rated in poor condition, and an additional 14 percent are rated in mediocre condition. In addition to deteriorated road conditions, 26 percent of Syracuse area bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Seventeen percent of Syracuse’s urban highways are considered congested, costing area drivers 10 hours each year due to congestion-related delays. Thirty-one people were killed in 2008 on Syracuse area roads, giving the region a traffic fatality rate of 6.8 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 Department of Transportation recognized the tremendous needs of our transportation system and submitted a \$25.8 billion capital program to the Legislature. This program must be adequately funded if we are to create jobs and repair a rapidly deteriorating infrastructure that is the lifeblood of our state's economy,” said Senator Valesky, Vice President Pro-Tempore of the New York State Senate.

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.

“Safe and efficient mobility is a critical need for any economy, but especially true in Central New York where our roads and bridges move so much of our goods, services and people,” said Darlene Kerr, president of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. “Infrastructure investment is needed for improved maintenance and new construction. Everyone can agree that safety is our first concern, but inadequate and deficient infrastructure costs everyone.”