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**PENNSYLVANIA'S INTERSTATE SYSTEM TURNS 50 YEARS OLD, REMAINS CRITICAL LINK IN STATE'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, SAVING EACH PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENT MORE THAN \$2,200 ANNUALLY IN SAFETY BENEFITS, SAVED TIME, REDUCED FUEL AND LOWER CONSUMER COSTS**  
**BENEFITS OF INTERSTATE SYSTEM MAY ERODE IN THE FUTURE UNLESS STATE CAN FUND NEEDED INTERSTATE REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS**

**Harrisburg, June 29, 2006** – For the last 50 years, Pennsylvania's Interstate Highway System has remained the most critical link in the state's transportation network, saving Pennsylvania residents \$28 billion annually - \$2,252 per person- in safety benefits, saved time, reduced fuel and lower consumer costs. But some of the benefits of Pennsylvania's Interstate Highway System may erode unless the state can secure additional funds for needed maintenance and widening projects, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group.

The TRIP report, entitled "Saving Lives, Time and Money: A report on the condition, impact, use and future needs of the Interstate Highway System," estimates that the additional safety features of the Interstate Highway System have saved approximately 7,600 lives in Pennsylvania since 1956. In addition to saving lives, improved traffic safety provided by the Interstate system saves each Pennsylvania resident \$78 annually (\$962 million statewide) in reduced healthcare costs and costs associated with lost productivity due to traffic crashes. Pennsylvania's Interstate Highway System also saves the average resident \$955 annually (\$11.8 billion statewide) in the value of saved time and fuel, and saves \$1,220 per resident (\$15.1 billion statewide) in reduced consumer costs for apparel, food, housing and transportation.

"Pennsylvania's Interstate's have provided tremendous safety, time and economic benefits over the last 50 years. But without an additional investment in maintaining and expanding the system, the state may see some of those benefits slip away," said William M. Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.

According to TRIP, 28 percent of Pennsylvania's urban Interstates are considered congested because they carry traffic levels that result in significant delays during peak travel hours. An additional seven percent of rural Interstates are also considered congested. Eleven percent of Pennsylvania's Interstate bridges are rated structurally deficient and 20 percent are rated functionally obsolete. Thirteen percent of Pennsylvania's Interstate pavements are in poor or mediocre condition. Twenty-three percent are in fair condition and the remaining 64 percent are rated in good condition.

"Most of us take this incredible transportation network for granted," said Ron Geist, managing director, PA Highway Information Association. "However, if we are to preserve and expand this important transportation asset, our highway planners and elected officials have to come up with some innovative design and funding solutions" added Geist.

Because it reduces travel times and provides more direct routes, the Interstate system saves each Pennsylvania resident 60 hours of travel time annually - 738 million hours statewide. Pennsylvania's Interstate system annually reduces statewide motor fuel consumption by 352 million gallons.

Pennsylvania faces a significant challenge in maintaining and rebuilding its aging Interstate Highway System and providing additional lane capacity to meet growing travel demand. Travel on Pennsylvania's Interstate highways is expected to increase by 50 percent by the year 2026. Traffic congestion is expected to worsen substantially on Pennsylvania's urban Interstate highways, unless additional lanes are added to these routes. By 2026, if additional capacity is not added to Pennsylvania's Interstate system, 67 percent of urban Interstates will be congested and 37 percent of rural Interstates will be congested.

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- Pennsylvania's Interstate system, which includes three percent of all roadway lane miles in the state, carries 24 percent of all vehicle travel in the state.
- Since funding of the Interstate system was approved in 1956, vehicle miles of travel in Pennsylvania has increased by 188 percent, the number of vehicles in Pennsylvania has increased by 154 percent and the state's population has jumped by 13 percent.