



Feel the Power

BRIDGES

Every day, millions of Americans drive on bridges which Federal Highway Administration inspectors have deemed structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. At best, these bridges are inefficient. At worst they are deadly, as the I-35 Bridge collapse in Minneapolis showed.

Our transportation system is held together by thousands of bridges, many of which are not up to the task – nearly 25 percent of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

- Generally, a structurally deficient bridge is deteriorating and can be unsafe. A structurally obsolete bridge is generally outdated, such as being too low to waterway to allow water shipping traffic or unable to meet traffic capacity. Both are serious problems which affect our nation's competitiveness.
- Some of our country's most densely populated areas are rife with deficient and obsolete bridges, including Washington, D.C. (65 percent), Massachusetts (50 percent), Rhode Island (52 percent) and New York (37 percent). These bridges are continually jammed with traffic, increasing the risk of auto accidents.
- Time is running out on many bridges, which were typically built to last 50 years. The average U.S. bridge is 43 years old, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The problems facing America's bridges are going unaddressed. Action and resources are needed now to prevent the cost and danger from escalating.

- The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials estimates that repairing deficient and obsolete bridges in the U.S. would require about \$140 billion – far more than the estimated \$10.5 billion a year currently invested in bridge improvements.
- Freight, predominantly transported by trucks, is steadily increasing and tonnage is forecast to double by 2035. Freight stresses bridges more than commuter traffic. As bridges become deficient, weight restrictions choke our nation's ability to move freight.

Upgrading and repairing bridges can provide an immediate and long-term boost to the American economy.

- Based on figures from the U.S. Department of Transportation, an annual \$17 billion investment to make our bridges safer could spur the creation of 476,000 jobs.