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San Francisco Region Second In Nation For Deficient Bridges *Federal Funds Fall Short as Need Increases*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On the heels of the sudden closure of a major commuting bridge in Louisville, KY, a new report shows that more than 18,000 of the nation's busiest bridges, clustered in the nation's metro areas, are rated as "structurally deficient," according to a new report from Transportation for America.

According to *The Fix We're In For: The State of Our Metro-Area Bridges*, the **San Francisco metro area is second in the nation in percentage of bridges needing repair**, for metro areas above 2 million people. Every minute, over 10,000 vehicles cross one of the San Francisco metro area's structurally deficient bridges.

"The dangerous state of our bridges is a problem that is getting worse by the year," said Stuart Cohen, Executive Director of TransForm. "Most of the nation's bridges were designed to last 50 years. Today the average age of California's bridges is just five years short of that. We need to move on this issue now."

The report found that **Pittsburgh, PA** had the highest percentage of deficient bridges (**30.4 percent**) for a metro area with a population of over 2 million (and overall). **Oklahoma City, OK (19.8 percent)** topped the chart for metro areas between 1-2 million, as did **Tulsa, OK (27.5 percent)** for metro areas between 500,000-1 million.

At the other end of the spectrum, the metro areas that had the smallest percentage of deficient bridges are: **Orlando, FL (0.6 percent)** for the largest metro areas; **Las Vegas, NV (0.2 percent)** for mid-sized metro areas; and **Cape Coral, FL (0.3 percent)** for smaller metro areas.

"There are more deficient bridges in our metropolitan areas than there are McDonald's restaurants in the entire country," said James Corless, director of Transportation for America, 18,239 versus roughly 14,000 McDonald's. "These metropolitan-area bridges are most costly and difficult to fix, but they also are the most urgent, because they carry such a large share of the nation's people and goods."

Nearly 70,000 bridges nationwide are rated "structurally deficient" and are in need of substantial repair or replacement, according to federal data. Metropolitan-area bridges carry 75 percent of the trips that are made on structurally deficient bridges, he noted.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) estimates that the backlog of potentially dangerous bridges would cost \$70.9 billion to eliminate, while the federal outlay for bridges amounts to slightly more than \$5 billion per year.

"The recent shutdown of the Sherman-Minton Bridge between Kentucky and Indiana was yet another reminder of the urgent need to repair our nation's bridges," Corless said. "A sincere initiative to fix these bridges would put thousands of people to work while ensuring that these critical links continue to carry people safely to work and that goods can make it to market, now and well into the future."

"For the Bay Area, bridge safety is even more critical due to the risk of earthquakes," added Cohen. "Monday marked the 22nd anniversary of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake which felled the Cypress Freeway in Oakland and damaged the Bay Bridge. For safety's sake, we need to keep ahead of bridge repairs and minimize earthquake dangers."

Congress has repeatedly declared the condition and safety of America's bridges to be of national significance. However, the current federal program falls short of the need, even as it allows states to shift funds from maintenance toward new construction, whether or not they can show progress toward rehabilitating deficient bridges.

Some states have worked hard to address the problem and have seen their backlog of deficient bridges shrink in number. However, two problems continue to persist: Existing federal programs offer no real incentives or assurances that aging bridges will actually get fixed; and the current level of investment is nowhere near what is needed to keep up with our rapidly growing backlog of aging bridges.

Last month, President Obama [introduced his jobs bill](#) before the Brent Spencer bridge in Cincinnati, OH, just weeks after engineers shutdown the [Sherman-Minton Bridge](#) due to cracks in the bridge supports, and also identified potential faults in the nearby [Kennedy Bridge](#). Since then, the President has regularly highlighted the poor state of our nation's bridges and the need to pass a jobs bill that will put construction workers and engineers back to work repairing our bridges and highways.

In order to prevent future catastrophes on our nation's roads and bridges, the report recommends that Congress should:

- Provide states with increased resources to repair and rebuild. States need federal support to back their efforts to prioritize repair and maintenance.
- Ensure that funds sent to states for bridge repair are used only for that purpose, unless a state can show it has addressed its repair needs.
- Require that new or rehabilitated be built so that they are safe for everyone who uses them, whether they are in vehicles, on foot or bicycle, or using public transit.

The full report can be downloaded at <http://t4america.org/docs/bridgereport/bridgereport-metros.pdf>.

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Transportation for America (T4 America) is the largest, most diverse coalition working on transportation reform today. Our nation's transportation network is based on a policy that has not been significantly updated since the 1950's. We believe it is time for a bold new vision — transportation that guarantees our freedom to move however we choose and leads to a stronger economy, greater energy security, cleaner environment and healthier America for all of us. We're calling for more responsible investment of our federal tax dollars to create a safer, cleaner, smarter transportation system that works for everyone.

TransForm works to create world-class public transportation and walkable communities in the Bay Area and beyond. We build diverse coalitions, influence policy, and develop innovative programs to improve the lives of all people and protect the environment.