

Associated General Contractors of America  
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# NYRIC Response to NYSDOT Panel Report on Transportation

The New York State Roadway Improvement Coalition (NYRIC) applauds the recommendations contained in the New York State Advisory Panel on Transportation Policy for 2025 report released today, calling them a "wake-up call for Governor Pataki and state Legislative leaders to immediately implement a new, fully funded five-year transportation program that dramatically increases the state's investment in its transportation infrastructure."

"As the report notes, 'trouble lies ahead' for New York State if it doesn't provide substantial new investment," said AJ Castelbuono, President & CEO of the New York State Chapter, Associated General Contractors, which is a member of NYRIC. "We agree with the panel's findings that the primary vehicle used to fund roads and bridges - the Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund - is broke and broken; it has become structurally unsound and functionally obsolete. We further commend the panel for recommending that New York State examine all possible revenues for transportation investments, including user fees, taxes, tolls and private investment."

The panel's findings that statewide pavement conditions have worsened from 2000 to 2003; that 37% of the state's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete; and New York's motorists spend \$2.3 billion a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs as a result of driving on roads that need repair echo findings of NYRIC-funded studies in both 2000 and 2001.

NYRIC applauds the panel's attempt to educate the public, legislature and media about the risks to our transportation system and the rewards to be gained by overcoming the challenges faced.

We support the recommendation that unless bold leadership is shown and adequate funding is provided, the infrastructure will continue to deteriorate, the economy will falter, jobs will be lost and quality of life in New York State will suffer dramatically.

The state leadership needs this legislative session to pass a strategic, multi-year funding plan that is substantial, sustainable, predictable and flexible. Our previous reliance

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on federal funding has come to an end.

We must fix the out-of-control debt service for the fund (\$1 billion per year) whose bonds previously paid for capital projects, as well as make major new investments in improving and expanding our system.

For far too long, we have relied on borrowing rather than pay-as-you-go revenue sources."

We are at the END OF THE ROAD. We, as a state, must address this crisis NOW. The consequence of not acting is not an option. While the report is a good stepping stone to the debate, its failure to publish a specific needs number identifying the magnitude of the problem is disappointing. Many feel, based on previous private needs studies, that the state is spending half of what it needs for roads and bridges. The public should demand that number to convince the leadership of New York to examine the question, "When the kids are ready for the road, will the road be ready for the kids?"

The New York Roadway Improvement Coalition is a broad-based organization of highway users, statewide contractors, contracting associations, engineering consultants, organized labor, and civic business groups whose purpose is to secure adequate and reliable long-term funding for New York's transportation infrastructure.