



For Immediate Release
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Study Shows Chicago Area Congestion on the Rise

Travelers Suffering from Longer Delays and Higher Travel Costs

*State Leaders Must Resolve Transportation Funding Crisis to
Relieve Congestion and Address All Critical Areas of Transportation Needs*

CHICAGO, IL – In Illinois traffic congestion is growing affecting more of the roads in more urban areas and for more hours of the day, according to the 2007 Urban Mobility Study by the Texas Transportation Institute released today.

The study reveals that Chicago travelers face the second longest daily commuting travel time in the country at 1.47 hours. In addition, in 2005 the cost of congestion was nearly \$4 billion in the Chicago area and \$711 million in the St. Louis area. Also in 2005, persons in the Chicago area spent 46 hours per year sitting in traffic, up from 33 hours in 1995.

The TTI Study showed some 142 million gallons of fuel were consumed in northeastern Illinois due to congestion. At a cost of \$3 per gallon, that amounts to \$426 million per year in fuel wasted in congestion. In the St. Louis area, 23 million gallons of fuel were consumed due to congestion, at a cost of \$69 million a year.

Congestion costs not only individuals, but the economy as a whole. Chicago is the key freight distribution hub for North America, with more than one-third of U.S. rail and truck cargo moving to, from or through Chicago. In 2005, trucks carried more than 243 million cargo tons in Illinois, 63 percent of all freight moved in the state.

Inadequate funding is curtailing road improvements needed to address congestion.

“This new congestion study reveals more evidence of Illinois’ dramatic need for transportation funding now,” said Michael Carrigan, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO and a co-chair of TFIC. “The Transportation for Illinois Coalition urges state leaders to address increasing congestion problems in Illinois as part of a comprehensive transportation funding plan.”

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“As the Urban Mobility Study shows, Illinois’ traffic demands are increasing and the state’s inability to provide comprehensive funding has created a transportation crisis,” said Doug Whitley, president of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and co-chair of TFIC. “We urge state leaders to resolve the state’s transportation funding crisis by approving a comprehensive transportation funding plan to addresses traffic congestion and all critical areas of need.”

Existing projects for building new roads or adding lanes to congested roads languish in the state’s multi-year highway construction program.

The Fiscal Year 2008-2013 state highway program includes construction funding for 106 miles of new roads/add lanes, at a cost of \$1.39 billion. Of that total, 59 miles – at a cost of \$491 million – have been in the program for five years or more. That amount represents 56 percent of the total mileage of new road/adds lanes.

Twenty-five of those miles have been in the program for nine years or more. Just five miles of the deferred miles are to be constructed in FY 2008. Construction of the remaining 54 miles continues to be pushed off until some time in the future.

The state’s ability to fund additional projects for congestion relief is severely constrained.

Since FY 2005, Illinois has added \$901 million in construction funding for 47 miles of new roads/add lanes. Twenty-five of those miles, accounting for nearly \$800 million in construction funding, are for projects associated with special federal funds secured by the Illinois Congressional Delegation in SAFETEA-LU, the multi-year federal funding authorization.

Outside of these special federal earmarks, Illinois has been able to program only about \$100 million in new construction funding since FY 2005, for 22 miles of new roads / add lanes. That amounts to five miles at \$25 million a year.

The next federal authorization is not due for several years; it is uncertain how much, if any, earmarked funding it may contain for building projects to relieve congestion.

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TFIC is a diverse group of statewide and regional business, labor, industry, not-for-profit and governmental organizations that have joined together in a united and focused effort to support a strong transportation alliance for Illinois. The Coalition takes a comprehensive approach and seeks to speak with one voice for all of Illinois when it comes to transportation funding needs at the federal and state level. This comprehensive approach involves all modes of transportation, including rail, air, water, highways and mass transit. For more information about TFIC, visit www.TFICIllinois.org.