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Contact:
Doug Whitley 217/522-5512
Michael Carrigan 217/544-4014

IDOT structurally deficient bridges are on the rise, while state bridge improvement projects sharply decline

*Structurally deficient IDOT-owned bridges have increased by 20 percent since 2003,
while IDOT reduced state bridge improvements by 48 percent*

TFIC: Increase bridge repair/replacement funding by \$1 billion over five years

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The number of Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) structurally deficient bridges is on the rise while state bridge improvements have sharply declined. Those are the findings of an analysis performed by the Transportation for Illinois Coalition (TFIC) released today.

The number of structurally deficient IDOT-owned bridges has increased by 20 percent since 2003, from 552 to 661, according to bridge data from the Federal Highway Administration and IDOT's *For The Record* reports. Meanwhile, budget cuts have forced IDOT to reduce state bridge improvements by 48 percent over the last three years compared to the previous three-year period. The number of bridge improvements fell from 256 to just 132. (Fiscal Years 2004-2006 compared to 2000-2003). (Source: IDOT's *For The Record* reports)

“The Minnesota bridge tragedy this summer reminds us all that our government must ensure safety for travelers in Illinois. While Illinois works hard with the dollars it has to perform bridge repairs and replacements, the needs have begun to dramatically outpace the dollars Illinois is spending for bridges,” said Michael Carrigan, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO and a co-chair of TFIC. “Illinois needs a comprehensive transportation funding plan that includes a meaningful commitment to bridge repair and replacement to ensure the safety of our bridges and the safety of our travelers.”

“The Transportation for Illinois Coalition is calling for a \$1 billion increase over five years for bridge repair and replacement in Illinois,” said Doug Whitley, president of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and co-chair of TFIC. “Included in our proposal is a doubling of the Township Bridge Program to \$30 million and the establishment of new County and Municipal bridge programs at \$30 million annually.”



In Illinois, 8.7 percent of IDOT bridges are structurally deficient according to FHWA Bridge Data, ranking IDOT 31st in the nation when ranking states by the fewest structurally deficient state DOT bridges.

Local governments are also in need of additional funding from the state as 13.2 percent of municipal bridges are classified as structurally deficient – a higher percentage than IDOT’s bridges.

Although counties have fewer structurally deficient bridges than IDOT, county structurally deficient bridges increased by 8 percent since 2003 and 9.9 percent of township bridges are structurally deficient. That is also higher than the percentage of IDOT’s structurally deficient bridges. A contributing factor to the problem is the Township Bridge Program has never been increased for inflation since its inception.

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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.