



The Transportation for Illinois Coalition's Response To The Minnesota Bridge Collapse

The Minnesota bridge collapse is a terrible tragedy. It is too early to know or to speculate on what may have caused the bridge to collapse. Hopefully, when all the studies are done, we may learn ways to prevent such catastrophic failures in the future.

In Illinois, there are about 26,600 bridges, of which nearly 8,300 are on the state system. Illinois continues to inspect these bridges as required, to post them for less than legal load limits where necessary, and to invest in their repair. The IDOT FY2008-13 proposed highway capital program:

- Improves the overall rating of state-system bridges from 90% in acceptable condition today to a projected 94% in acceptable condition at the end of FY2013;
- Invests 23% (\$1.8 billion) of the state's highway program in bridges;
- Repairs/constructs a total of 984 bridges on the state system.

That is the good news. But because of the need to invest so much in the state's bridges, insufficient funding is left for other highway needs, such as repair on existing roadways, congestion relief and building new roads for economic development.

According to the IDOT FY2008-13 proposed highway capital program, the miles of bad roads in Illinois are projected to grow by 119% by the end of 2013. At that point, 3,450 miles will be in unacceptable condition -- more than one out of every five miles on the state system.

While Illinois is keeping up with its bridge needs, the rest of the state system is in rapid decline.

The nation's infrastructure, including Illinois', is aging; traffic, especially heavy truck traffic is growing; and the need for infrastructure reinvestment is escalating. We all depend on the highway system for the delivery of goods and services. In Minnesota, until the bridge can be replaced, state officials will have to figure out alternative ways for moving the eight lanes of traffic that used to traverse the I-35 bridge.