

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

July 2013 Newsletter



I-93 Project To Stop in 2015

Without any additional funding, the I-93 widening project will come to a stop in 2015. If this occurs, the state will be left with three lanes in each direction from the Massachusetts state line to Exit 3 in Windham, NH, and complete work on Exit 5 in Londonderry, NH. That will leave a gap between Exits 3 and 5 and Exit 5 to the I-293 split of unfinished, two lane highway.

The amount needed to complete the project is approximately \$250 million, bringing the total cost of the project to around \$500 million. That is nearly 10 times the original estimated cost when the project was planned in the 1980s. As the project became delayed because of lack of funding and other issues, costs of construction and materials rose. This problem is mirrored by many other infrastructure improvement projects around the state that cannot be completed.



Construction at Exit 3 on I-93

Not only is the state facing a funding problem for I-93, there are several other issues as well. The environmental permits for the project lapse in 2020, which is only seven years away. If construction stops in 2015 and no new funding is anticipated in the short or long term, there is a real possibility that the permits could lapse. When initially obtaining the permits, lawsuits were brought by environmental groups, which delayed the process. This could happen again.

Additionally, the state has heard that businesses will not come to New Hampshire until the project is finished. They don't want to waste money by having their delivery trucks sit in congestion on I-93. If they are not coming to New Hampshire, then they will likely locate in one of the neighboring states. These neighboring states, especially Vermont and Massachusetts have made investing in the infrastructure a priority. They know that by providing better transportation routes they can attract new businesses, improving their economies.

New revenue was proposed and passed by the House this year in the form of an increase in the gasoline and diesel taxes, commonly known as the road toll. House Bill 617 proposed an increase of 12 cents spread over 3 years for gasoline and 6 years for diesel. Every penny of the increase would have gone towards infrastructure maintenance. The increased funding would have allowed the state to complete the I-93 project, as well as maintain the entire state's infrastructure. The bill failed in the Senate, and while the proposal was included in the House version of the budget, it was ultimately removed during negotiations.

The effects of no new revenue ripple across the state—less paving will be done, less maintenance will be done, fewer bridge repairs will be done. To read more about the effects on the critical infrastructure areas, go to www.saferoadsnh.com.

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

Safety • Quality of Life • Economic Development

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Safer Road Partners

Associated General Contractors of NH

The Associated General Contractors is a non-profit trade organization of general contractors, subcontractors, and industry professionals dedicated to improving industry standards.

NH Good Roads Association

NH Good Roads Association is a non-profit trade organization established to encourage the development of a safe, efficient and environmentally sound highway transportation system.

Safety and Health Council of Northern New England

The Council's mission is to educate and promote safety & health policies, practices and procedures that prevent and mitigate human economic losses arising from unintended causes.

NH Association of Chiefs of Police

The Association secures a closer relationship among commanding officers all over the state, to encourage a cooperative relationship among all police officials.

NH Lodging & Restaurant Association

The Association is a non-partisan organization to promote, protect and educate the food service and lodging industries and to ensure positive business growth for our members.

Business & Industry Association

The Association is NH's leading business trade association. It advocates for business interests with state and federal legislators and regulators.

Hooksett Open Road Tolling

The latest Open Road Tolling is now open at the Hooksett Toll Plaza on I-93. The benefits of implementing ORT at the Hooksett Tolls include:

- Improved customer convenience
- Reduced travel time – 270,000 hours annually
- No lines or stopping to pay tolls
- Reduced fuel consumption – 465,000 gallons annually
- Improved air quality – less vehicle idling and delays
- Safer – no lane changing or slowing down
- 30% discount for E-ZPass “passenger type” vehicles

The \$23 million project converted six conventional toll lanes to four ORT lanes (two northbound and two southbound). Those lanes are separated by concrete barrier from conventional toll lanes on each side of the Hooksett Plaza. The Hooksett Tolls process over 25 million vehicles a year, and up to 80,000 vehicles a day during summer months.

This is the second open road tolling facility New Hampshire has implemented. The first was opened on I-95 at the Hampton Toll Plaza.

2013 Transportation Guide

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration produces an annual Pocket Guide to Transportation. This compact resource provides snapshots of data on the U.S. transportation system and highlights major trends.

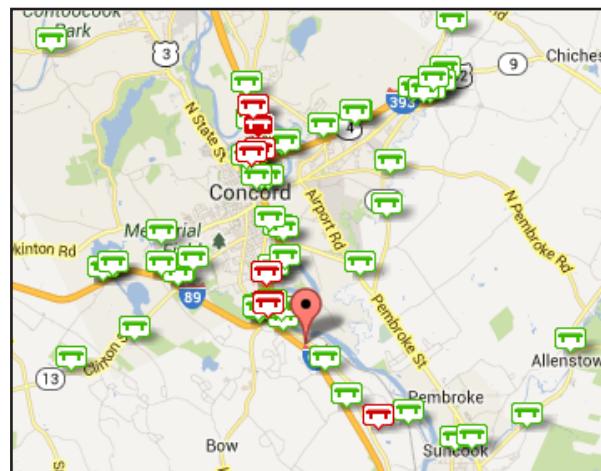
The guide is divided into five sections:

- Safety
- Transportation System & Equipment
- Economic Competitiveness
- System Use & Livable Communities
- Environmental Sustainability

To download the Pocket Guide, go to <http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/node/11792>.

Where Are The Deficient Bridges Near You?

Ever wanted to easily see where the structurally deficient bridges are near you? Transportation for America has developed a new, interactive, page on their website that allows users to plug in an address and see the structurally deficient bridges within a ten mile radius. The map below shows the ten mile radius around the A Safer Road To Tomorrow headquarters. There are seven structurally deficient bridges within the area. The majority of the bridges are on major routes that carry hundreds of commuters each day. According to the Coalition, more individuals travel over structurally deficient bridges (260 million) than are served at McDonald's worldwide (68 million) on a daily basis.



Source: Transportation for America

The Federal Highway Administration recently released data on 2012 bridge conditions, and the coalition has analyzed the data to detect trends and the overall health of the nation's bridges. As part of their report, Transportation for America has also ranked the states from worst to best bridges, based on percentage of structurally deficient bridges. New Hampshire ranks number 8 with 14.4% of its bridges rated structurally deficient. This is an improvement of 5.5% over 2011 numbers.

While the numbers of this report show an improvement, these figures are just for structurally deficient bridges, they do not include the number of bridges considered functionally obsolete. New Hampshire's Red List, which tops 400 when combining state and local bridges, includes both structurally deficient and functional obsolete bridges. According to the Department of Transportation, even though 18 bridges are removed from the Red List each year, another 16 bridges are added annually.

To read the Transportation for America report, and see the structurally deficient bridges near you, go to <http://t4america.org/>.

Graduated Licenses For Teen Drivers

Driving Towards Zero, a coalition of organizations working towards zero driving fatalities, has put together an informational brochure on graduated licenses (GDL) for teen drivers. The brochure points out that while teen driving is safest when GDL laws are in place, safe driving habits begin at home.

Graduate licensing includes three stages: 1) Learner's Stage; 2) Intermediary Stage; and 3) Full License. The state of New Hampshire currently requires learners to complete 40 total hours of supervised driving by a parent or other adult over the age of 25. Best practices show that the ideal minimum number of practice hours is 65. Additionally, teens 16 and 17 must complete a state approved driver education program. New Hampshire does not have a formal learners permit process. Moving to the intermediary stage, New Hampshire has set passenger limitations for the first six months of driving, and nighttime driving restrictions.

The number one health risk for teens is driving, and GDL can reduce the number of preventable teen crashes, and the resulting injuries and deaths. For more information, visit the Driving Toward Zero website at www.newhampshiredrivingtowardzero.com.

States Implement Ways For Hybrid & Electric Vehicles To Pay Their Fair Share

Better Roads website is reporting on a trend picked up by six states who have declining revenue from their gasoline taxes. As the gasoline tax is one of the primary revenue sources for infrastructure investment, less revenue means less maintenance can be performed. Washington, Virginia, New Jersey, Arizona, Indiana, and North Carolina are all exploring options to charge an additional fee for hybrid and electric vehicles.

The table below shows the various proposals each state is considering. Texas, while not shown in the table below is also considering a proposal similar to Arizona's. At the time of print, only Washington's & Virgina's proposals have been implemented.

State	Legislation
Washington State	\$100 annual fee for electric vehicles
Virginia	\$64 annual fee for hybrid & electric vehicles
New Jersey	\$50 annual fee on electric & CNG vehicles
Arizona	1 cent per mile driven on Arizona highways
Indiana	Registration fee
North Carolina	\$100/electric; \$50/hybrid

Better Roads highlighted a report by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy that showed in 2010 gas tax revenue dropped 7%. With the federal gas tax having remained at 18.4 cents per gallon for the last twenty years, any drop in revenue collection can have significant impacts for the maintenance of the infrastructure system.

Furthermore as the desire to be environmentally friendly grows, the number of consumers opting for hybrid and electric vehicles grow too. In combination with increased alternative fuel vehicle sales, is the Federal Government's requirement that all new vehicles get 35.5 miles per gallon by 2016. By 2025, manufacturers will have to meet 54.5 miles per gallon.

Critics of the proposals say that they are in contrast with the government's promotion of renewable energy. They question how government can encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles, and reduce the dependence on oil, while charging a fee for these vehicles. Additionally, they cite that the relatively small amount of hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles on the road is not impacting gas tax collections enough to warrant an additional fee.

While New Hampshire has not implemented any new tax or fee on hybrid and electric vehicles, the Legislature has studied the issue. A commission was formed in 2012 to study hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles and their impact on revenue collected from the gas tax.

As part of the commission, the Department of Environmental

Services (DES) reported that there are approximately 14,000 registered hybrid vehicles and 57 all-electric vehicles in New Hampshire. This has a financial impact of approximately \$255,000 in lost gas tax revenue each year. Additionally, DES reported that while consumption of fuel and subsequent revenue earned by the road toll is decreasing, the number of vehicle miles traveled is increasing.

An interim report of the commission released in 2012 stated that further research on the subject is needed, but also indicated that legislation could be introduced in 2014 to address the issue. According to the report, the following specific areas will be looked at when studying the issue:

- Defining what vehicles should be taxed differently?
- Should a fee be added to the existing registration fee?
- The challenges, hurdles, and feasibility of using mileage based system.
- How would a tax on alternative fuel be measured and collected?
- Is it feasible to develop a separate system of taxes/fees for the alternative fuel or hybrid vehicles?

This study commission report was issued prior to the 2012 elections. With new legislative leaders in place through the 2014 Legislative Session, it remains to be seen what progress the commission has made on this issue.

14% Decrease in Municipal Aid Between 2012 and 2014

The House and Senate recently finished budget negotiations for fiscal years 2014 and 2015. Part of the negotiations includes the amount of aid municipalities will receive from the state for various programs, including education, environmental, and highway, and other general funds.

Municipal block aid is distributed to cities and towns from the state based on the previous years receipts of highway fund revenue. Municipalities receive 12% of the revenue earned from the state's road toll, and the funds can only be used towards construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of each municipality's Class IV and V highways.

In 2012, municipalities received \$34.5 million in block grant aid for their town infrastructure systems. By the end of 2013, that aid is projected to decrease 13% to \$30.2 million. The aid will decrease another 1% from 2013 to 2014, leaving the aid at \$30 million for both fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

Without increased revenue from funding sources, it is likely that the aid to municipalities will remain level, or continue to decrease. For a complete spreadsheet on the projected aid for municipalities, go to http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/LBA/Budget/fy2014_2015_budget.aspx.



A Safer Road to Tomorrow
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Buy Safe, Drive Safe, & Stay Safe Mobile App

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has developed a new mobile application that provides real-time vehicle safety information. SaferCar allows users to search NHTSA's 5-Star Safety Ratings for vehicles by make and model, locate car seat installation help, file a vehicle safety complaint, find recall information, and subscribe to automatic notices about vehicle recalls.



The SaferCar app gives individuals immediate access to safety information, including:

- **5-Star Safety Ratings:** Individuals considering vehicle purchases can look up crash test ratings and compare them across different makes and models.
- **Recalls and Complaints:** Users can stay on top of safety issues for vehicles they already own. Individuals can register their vehicles to be notified by NHTSA if a safety issue is discovered.
- **Help Installing Child Seats:** Users can quickly get driving directions to the nearest child seat inspection station, and get assistance to properly install their car seats and boosters.
- **Safety Headlines and Alerts:** Users can receive important news and information from NHTSA, as well as recall notices on their recorded vehicles.

The App is available for the iPhone and iPad, and can be found in the App Store for free.

Brought to you by the Safer Roads Partners:



*Safety & Health Council
of Northern New England*