

# REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

## A Study Pursuant to HR 2022 - 130: PennDOT Comparative Performance Measures

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House Resolution (HR) 2022-130, adopted by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on September 21, 2022, directed the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to conduct a comparative study of Pennsylvania's road and bridge funding inputs and Pennsylvania's transportation rankings relative to selected other state transportation performance indicators. Key highlights from the study include the following:

- ❖ **The Motor License Fund (MLF) primarily finances Pennsylvania's roads and bridges.**



Liquid Fuels Tax  
\$3,384,633

License & Fees  
\$1,139,824

Other  
\$9,480

- ❖ **Funding for roads and bridges is costly, and it remains a public policy challenge for federal, state, and local governments.** Pennsylvania and the peer states we identified for this study (Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia) faced funding shortfalls. By comparison, Pennsylvania's highway and bridge projects have an \$8.1 billion funding gap, which grows annually.
- ❖ **An unsustainable revenue source for the MLF complicates Pennsylvania's transportation funding gap.** The "gas tax" -- the primary revenue generator for the MLF -- is a less reliable revenue source because vehicles have become more fuel efficient, and consumer demand for electric vehicles has increased. Further, we found most peer states rely on the gas tax for 50% or less of total transportation revenue. In comparison, over 70% of Pennsylvania's transportation revenue is from the gas tax.
- ❖ **Comparatively, Pennsylvania has more disbursements for state-administered highways and receives more federal funding than peer states, but Pennsylvania also has more state-owned lane miles to manage.** When factoring in population and considering the number of registered vehicles in Pennsylvania, the commonwealth's funding is more average among peer states.

- ❖ **We found that many selected peer states also struggle with poor roads and bridges.**

Comparing Pennsylvania to peer states is helpful in some ways but potentially misleading in others. As a result, "apples-to-apples" comparisons between states are difficult to make. For example, peer states with "better roads" also faced fewer input obstacles, such as less truck traffic, better weather, and fewer registered vehicles. We caution readers to consider these factors when comparing Pennsylvania to other states.

- ❖ **In nearly every road category we reviewed, Pennsylvania ranked worse than the national average for percentage of road mileage in poor condition.** Pennsylvania's poor road quality has an impact on motorists' budgets as well. Recent research estimated the financial impact of poor-quality roadways is an added \$639 per motorist.
- ❖ **Among peer states, Pennsylvania has the highest percentage of bridges older than 50 years and a higher proportion of structurally deficient bridges.** The national average for structurally deficient bridges is 7.1%. Although an improving metric, 13% of Pennsylvania's bridges are structurally deficient. This comparison is significant because when constructed, these bridges had a projected useful life of 50 years.
- ❖ **The I-95 overpass-bridge collapse in June was a devastating accident; however, the incident highlights why bridges deemed structurally deficient should be a state funding priority.** For example, as of June 2023, FHWA estimated the cost of the I-95 rebuild would be between \$25 million and \$30 million, or five to six times the average cost of a typical planned federal highway bridge replacement in Pennsylvania. Aside from construction costs, failing bridges have a safety, convenience, and economic impact.

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