

America's Bridges Need Repair – Market Fact

As Congress deliberates the federal budget for 2024, decisions as to where to allocate funds can be crucial. The vast landmass and distances between cities and population centers in the United States demands an expansive and organized network of highways. As the population of the country has grown, so has the number of automobiles and trucks traversing the enormous national highway system.

As the highways expanded to accommodate more traffic and heavier loads, roads and bridges have become integral components to the nation's transportation system.

Of the 117,483 bridges covering the nation's highways, The Department of Transportation has identified over 5,230 as structurally deficient. The District of Columbia alone has over 16% of its highway bridges deemed structurally deficient.

According to the Department of Transportation, there are over 254 million registered automobiles traversing the highways of America, the largest passenger vehicle population of any country worldwide.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has estimated the average weight of passenger vehicles and light trucks to be approximately 4,000 pounds. Large tractor-trailers and commercial vehicles can weigh in excess of 150,000 pounds, with 80,000 pounds as a maximum for many states. Over the years, automobiles and transport trucks have actually gotten heavier as engines have become stronger, more efficient, and capable of hauling much heavier loads.

The combination of increased weight and erosion from weather has hindered the structural integrity of thousands of bridges over the years. In addition to weight and erosion, fault lines and earthquakes have also taken a toll on bridges due to frequent seismic occurrences.

Source: Department of Transportation



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