## Bridges Index

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### Observation 1: Inherency

### Current levels of investment in the Federal Highway Bridge Program are insufficient to keep up with rapid deterioration of thousands of our nations bridges .

Lilly Shoup, Nick Donohue and Marisa Lang March 30 2011 The Fix We’re In For: The State of Our Nation’s Bridges TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA the largest, most diverse coalition working on trans¬portation reform today http://t4america.org/docs/bridgereport/bridgereport-national.pdf

Congress created the Federal Highway Bridge Program to fix and replace deficient bridges throughout the country, but current funding is insufficient to keep up with rapid deterioration. Figure A compares the size of the bridge program from 2006 through 2009 with FHWA estimates of the sums needed to catch up on the current repair backlog. While appropriations have increased by $650 million, bridge needs over the same time period have increased by $22.8 billion. Regardless of the amount of wear and tear on a specific bridge, most bridges are designed to last roughly 50 years. The average age of bridges in the U.S. is 42 years old. The number of structurally deficient bridges is virtually guaranteed to increase over time, as a wave of old bridges reach the end of their designed lives.

By the end of the last decade, nearly 200,000 of the nation’s roughly 600,000 highway bridges were 50 years old or older. By 2030, that number could double without substantial bridge replacement. At the current rates of aging and replacement, almost half of the nation’s bridges will require major structural investments within the next 15 years.2

### Plan:

### The United States federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure investment in bridge repair and maintenance.

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### Observation 2: Solvency

### Additional federal investment is essential, must ensure funds are used for bridge repair and allow regular maintenance to be undertaken on all bridges.

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As the chart earlier in this report shows, the federal transportation program currently provides only a fraction of the funds needed for maintenance and repair. Although a number of states are making repair of existing assets a priority, more support from the federal government is essential. The nation’s bridges are aging and traffic demands are increasing, even as state and local revenues are shrinking. Though the size of the federal program increased by 14 percent between 2006 and 2009, state-level needs increased at the same time by 47 percent. Congress also must ensure funds sent to states for bridge repair are used only for that purpose. Today, states can transfer bridge funds to other purposes – even if they have bridges clearly in need of repair. These funds should only be used for other purposes if the state’s bridges are in a state of good repair. In addition, states should be given the flexibility to develop long-term programs that prioritize both keeping bridges in good condition and fixing or replacing deficient bridges. Even in instances where it is more cost-effective to perform regular repair on a bridge to prevent it from becoming deficient, the current federal program only allows states to fix a bridge that is structurally deficient with a low sufficiency rating. Some states are already taking constructive steps to repair their infrastructure. These best practices could serve as a model for other states and complement an improved federal program. Michigan, for example, has greatly increased the ratio of spending on routine maintenance and pavement preservation vis-à-vis capacity increases and new roads by attempting to meet a goal of 95 percent of freeways and 85 percent of non-freeways in good condition by 2007, a goal established by Michigan’s State Transportation Commission in 1997. The Florida Department of Transportation is bound by state statute that lists preservation as the first of three “prevailing principles,” and sets maintenance standards for pavement and bridges. Upgrade bridges so that they are safe and accessible for all who use them. Congress should adopt a “complete streets” policy to ensure that when our aging bridges are replaced, they are designed to provide safe access for all who need them, whether in vehicles, on foot or bicycle, or using public transportation.

### Almost 70,000 bridges are structurally deficient and need repair. 70.9 billion is needed to address the backlog of bridges.

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Despite billions of dollars in annual federal, state and local funds directed toward the maintenance of existing bridges, 69,223 bridges – representing more than 11 percent of total highway bridges in the U.S. – are classified as “structurally deficient,” according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Structurally deficient bridges require significant maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement. A number of bridges also exceed their expected lifespan of 50 years. The average age of an American bridge is 42 years.The maintenance backlog will only worsen as bridges age and costs rise. According to FHWA’s 2009 statistics, $70.9 billion is needed to address the current backlog of deficient bridges. This figure will likely increase as many of our most heavily traveled bridges — including those built more than 40 years ago as part of the Interstate System — near the end of their expected lifespan.

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### Advantage \_\_: Economy

### Economic recovery and growth are in danger because of lack of focus on job creation.

Robert Pollin, Codirector, Political Economy Research Institute, <http://truth-out.org/news/item/9666-jobs-numbers-show-recession-far-from-over> Jobs Numbers Show Recession Far From Over June 8 2012

POLLIN: This is obvious stuff. This is economics 101. If you cut spending, you cut job creation, because people have to get paid to spend money and to stimulate the economy. So we have to reverse the logic of austerity that is consuming the entire Western Hemisphere, Europe as well as the United States. There is no alternative to that if we are serious about any kind of recovery. Recoveries do not come out of imposing austerity conditions. It was obvious before this recession, and the experience that we've had for the last two years have contradicted all arguments on behalf of austerity. It doesn't work. It never has worked. There's no logic behind why it should work. So that's what we're experiencing.And by the way, the job numbers, the 69,000 jobs, are, you know, roughly half of what is necessary just to maintain the unemployment rate at level. And that's not even getting us, even, any improvement. Therefore, as long as we continue along this path, we can expect there will be no significant improvement, if any, on job creation.

### The future of American growth is unpredictable – potentially on our way off the cliff.

Tai Adelaja, Russia Profile, June 21, 2012. “Anemic Global Growth,” http://en.ria.ru/analysis/20120621/174170969.html.

The panelists, many of whom come from developing nations, place the blame on big economies, like the United States, which some said has been running a dangerous experiment with the global economy. “Whatever is being said about the Eurozone crisis, the elephant in the room is the huge budget deficit in the United States, which continues to balloon,” said Cevdet Akçay, the chief economist of Koç Financial Services and Yapi Kredi. “The crisis that has now engulfed the global economy is structural and cannot be treated using stop-gap measures. But that’s precisely what the United States is doing as it tries to jumpstart its economy through further financial infusion and unrestrained borrowing.” The global economic space is chaotic and has been turned upside down by the three-dimensional threat to trade, finances and growth expectations, Akçay said. But while the United States might as well succeed, the American strategy is unlikely to work in the Eurozone economies because of their weaker demographics and the ongoing financial crisis, he added. The synchronous slowdown in global economic activity and the prospect that the United States could go off the so-called "fiscal cliff" at the end of this year are the greatest challenges facing policymakers, said Peter Ong, Singaporean Civil Service chief.

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### 1 in 9 bridges are deteriorating – thousands are structurally deficient

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Today, one out of every nine bridges that U.S. motorists cross each day is likely to be deteriorating to some degree. Nearly 70,000, or 11.5 percent, of our 599,996 bridges nationwide are rated “structurally deficient,” according to government standards. (See box on “What qualifies a Bridge as ‘Structurally Deficient.’”) Twenty-three states across the country have a higher percentage of deficient bridges than the national average of 11.5 percent. The five states with the worst bridge conditions all exceed a 20 percent share of structurally deficient bridges. Pennsylvania has the largest share of deteriorating bridges at 26.5 percent, followed by Oklahoma (22.0%), Iowa (21.7%), Rhode Island (21.6%) and South Dakota (20.3%). At the other end of the spectrum, five states have less than 5 percent of their bridges rated as structurally deficient. Nevada leads the rankings at 2.2 percent, followed by Florida (2.4%), Texas (3.0%), Arizona (3.0%) and Utah (4.5%). Table 1 shows all 50 states and the District of Columbia ranked by their percentage of structurally deficient bridges, with “1” signifying the worst conditions and “51” the best.

### Bridges are key to the economy – Preventative maintenance programs are the best option in the infrastructure industry for job creation and long term prosperity.

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Bridges provide crucial access between regions and cities, linking workers to jobs, goods to markets and people to essential services. According to the FHWA, transportation agencies would need $70.9 billion to overcome the current backlog of deficient bridges.3 This investment would be money well spent, as poor bridge conditions have major implications for traveler safety, mobility and economic activity.

Allowing roads and bridges to slip into disrepair ultimately costs state and local governments billions more than the cost of regular, timely repair. Over a 25-year period, deferring maintenance of bridges and highways can cost three times as much as preventative repairs. The backlog also increases safety risks, hinders economic prosperity and significantly burdens taxpayers.

Preservation efforts can also extend the expected service life of a road for an additional 18 years, preventing the need for major reconstruction or replacement.4 In addition to the safety imperative, investing in the construction, expansion and repair of our nation’s transportation infrastructure creates jobs today while laying the foundation for long-term economic prosperity. Repair work on roads and bridges generates 16 percent more jobs than construction of new bridges and roads.5

For all these reasons, Congress has repeatedly declared the condition and safety of our bridges to be of national significance. However, the current federal program does not ensure transportation agencies have enough money and accountability to get the job done.

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A national bridge investment campaign can employ thousands of workers; improving the economy and reducing poverty.

Donna Cooper (Senior Fellow with the Economic Policy team at American Progress. Formerly the deputy mayor for policy for Philadelphia and secretary of policy and planning for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) “Repairing Bridges Can Lift Families Out of Poverty” Center For American Progress, September 27 2011

There are so many bridges in need of repair, nearly 68,000 in these 10 states alone. That works out to 37 unemployed workers per bridge. If work began on just a quarter of these bridges with funds from the American Jobs Act thousands of unemployed construction and skilled trades workers could return to work. Doing so would go a long way toward reducing the poverty rate in each of these states. Before the Great Recession hit, 9.5 percent of all American families were living in poverty. From beginning of the recession in 2008 through the end of 2010, the economy lost more than 7 million jobs at the same time poverty rose to 11.3 percent. Simply employing all the workers who lost their jobs due to the recession will not eradicate poverty. But it would go a long way toward reducing the tragically alarming incidence of 1 in 6 Americans who are struggling today to stay afloat with incomes below the federal poverty level. Obviously not everyone boasts the skills to rebuild a bridge. But there is no question that a national bridge repair campaign, the start of which is envisioned in the American Jobs Act, can offer tens of thousands of Americans a bridge to greater prosperity

### Investment in bridges is necessary to solve for congestion and allow efficient truck freight travel– the nation’s bridges are “chokepoints” on our highways

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials 2008 http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/

Adding further to the compelling need for bridge investment is the fact that the nation cannot fix its congestion problems without fixing its bridge problems. Most of the nation’s traffic and the vast majority of its truck freight travel on the nation’s major routes—the Interstate Highway System, the National Highway System and the urban freeways. The Interstate Highway System alone carries an estimated 24.5 percent of all miles traveled on U.S. highways, even though it comprises about 1 percent of all public road miles. In 2006, the Interstate Highway System turned 50, and it is showing its age. Its 46,747 miles carried an estimated 727 billion vehicle miles of travel in 2004. Between 1995 and 2004 annual travel on the Interstate Highway System grew by 2.8 percent, at the same time that the system was expanded by only one-half of one percent. As a result, congestion has significantly increased on the Interstate Highway system and its 55,315 bridges. Nearly 12 percent of the rural Interstate bridges and 21 percent of the urban Interstates bridges were considered “functionally obsolete,” which means they are too narrow for today’s traffic volumes. The Texas Transportation Institute’s 2007 Annual Urban Mobility Report notes that annual hours of delay per traveler in major urban areas rose from 21 hours in 1982 to 43 in 1995 to 54 in 2005, an increase of 157 percent in 23 years. Between 2004 and 2005, delays increased 3 hours, showing how quickly we are being stymied in traffic. Much of this delay occurs at interchanges—and much of the interchange improvement costs are a direct result of the bridges that separate and elevate the lanes of freeway traffic. It is this “grade separation” that lies at the heart of modern freeway design, freeway speed, freeway safety and freeway convenience. Interchanges are the first component of a freeway to become congested. The movements of merging, lane changing, and exiting cause traffic to slow down, conflict and become congested when volumes exceed design capacity

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Congestion destroys productivity, trade, and competitiveness

Building America’s Future, 2011, pg 11.

Congestion and capacity constraints threaten to increase the cost of trade and impede our global competitiveness. Delays in freight movement impose real costs on businesses that reduce productivity, impede our competitiveness and increase prices for consumers. General Mills estimates that every one mile per hour reduction in average speed of its trucking shipments below posted limits adds $2million in higher annual costs.

### Truck freight transportation efficiency has a direct link to economic growth

UDOT, 02 January 2002, http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight\_analysis/improve\_econ/appa.htm#s1

Freight Transportation and the Economy: A Description of the Linkages The American economy can grow and deliver improved living standards through one of two means, more workers or more productivity. With an aging population and net birth rates in decline, the nation is heavily dependent on productivity growth to achieve its economic goals. Transportation investment is important because its principal influence is on productivity. Exhibit 1 illustrates how investments in transportation infrastructure can lead to generative effects2 and growth in the national economy. Although improvements in passenger transportation have important economic ramifications, freight transportation enhancements that reduce the costs of moving goods (and services) to and from markets are critical to economic expansion. This is because the movement of goods is what economists term a factor input in the production of goods. Much like labor and capital, transportation costs affect directly the price of goods and services and the profits of producers. Consequently, investments that reduce the cost of moving goods to and from markets (via improvements in reliability, transit times, service levels, etc.) can help to increase and sustain economic growth. In effect, the efficiency and reliability of the freight transportation system affects economic productivity, and many economists would argue that productivity is the most important determinant of economic performance.

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### Federal investment in bridge infrastructure maintenance is key to economic competitiveness and military mobility.

James L. Oberstar SEPTEMBER 5, 2007 (former U.S. Representative, Chairman of the Committee on Transportation Infrastructure) “Congressional Hearing on STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGES IN THE UNITED STATES” http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg37652/html/CHRG-110hhrg37652.htm

Many of our facilities are stretched to the limit of their design life and even beyond. This is not the first inquiry into this subject matter. Twenty years ago, on December 1st and 2nd, 1987, I held hearings on bridge safety--not this entire volume but the last third of it--on the issue of bridge safety 20 years after the collapse of the Silver Bridge between Ohio and West Virginia--46 lives lost--to assess the state of bridge safety in this country and what was being done at the Federal and State levels. A remarkable observation by one of the witnesses was of a structural engineer testifying for the Center for Auto Safety, who said in 1987, bridge maintenance and inspection is in the Stone Age. There are 594,101 bridges in the national bridge inventory. That is a very large number. It is 200,000 more than in 1987 when I conducted those hearings; 26 percent of those bridges--one in four--is structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The U.S. DOT has reported that more than $65 billion could be invested immediately, cost beneficial, to replace or otherwise address bridge deficiencies. An area where we need strong Federal leadership is for those bridges on the National Highway System. That is a 162,000-mile network. It includes the interstate highway system of 46,700-plus miles. It is our strategic highway network for military mobilization. It is 1 percent of the Nation's mileage, but it carries 26 percent of the traffic. The NHS is 4 percent of the Nation's mileage, but it carries 45 percent of vehicle miles traveled and 75 percent of heavy truck traffic, 90 percent of tourist traffic on our National Highway System. There are 116,172 bridges on the National Highway System; 55,000 of those are on the interstate; 6,175 of those bridges have been rated structurally deficient; and half of those are bridges on the interstate, over 2,800. The DOT reports that the current National Highway System backlog of investment in bridge structures is $32 billion, and that includes $19 billion for the interstate system alone. Addressing the needs of bridges is critical to public safety, to regional mobility, to national mobility, to economic competitiveness. It demands a national response. For over 20 years I have paid attention to bridge issues, attempted to move here, to move there, to increase our funding in bridge structures, to provide increased capacity in investment through our highway trust fund, but we obviously have not done enough.

### Infrastructure investment in bridges stimulates the economy—empirical evidence of both short-term and long-term growth.

Boushey 2011 — Heather Boushey, Senior Economist at the Center for American Progress, previously held economist positions with the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, the Center for Economic and Policy Research, and the Economic Policy Institute, holds a Ph.D. in economics from the New School for Social Research, 2011 (“Now Is the Time to Fix Our Broken Infrastructure,” Center for American Progress, September 22nd, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/09/aja\_infrastructure.html, Accessed 06-09-2012)

Investing in infrastructure creates jobs and yields lasting benefits for the economy, including increasing growth in the long run. Upgrading roads, bridges, and other basic infrastructure creates jobs now by putting people to work earning good, middle-class incomes, which expands the consumer base for businesses. These kinds of investments also pave the way for long-term economic growth by lowering the cost of doing business and making U.S. companies more competitive.

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There is ample empirical evidence that investment in infrastructure creates jobs. In particular, investments made over the past couple of years have saved or created millions of U.S. jobs. Increased investments in infrastructure by the Department of Transportation and other agencies due to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act saved or created 1.1 million jobs in the construction industry and 400,000 jobs in manufacturing by March 2011, according to San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank economist Daniel Wilson.[1] Although infrastructure spending began with government dollars, these investments created jobs throughout the economy, mostly in the private sector.[2]

Infrastructure projects have created jobs in communities nationwide. Recovery funds improved drinking and wastewater systems, fixed bridges and roads, and rehabilitated airports and shipyards across the nation. Some examples of high-impact infrastructure projects that have proceeded as a result of Recovery Act funding include:

\* An expansion of a kilometer-long tunnel in Oakland, California, that connects two busy communities through a mountain.[3]

\* An expansion and rehabilitation of the I-76/Vare Avenue Bridge in Philadelphia and 141 other bridge upgrades that supported nearly 4,000 jobs in Pennsylvania in July 2011.[4]

\* The construction of new railway lines to serve the city of Pharr, Texas, as well as other infrastructure projects in that state that have saved or created more than 149,000 jobs through the end of 2010.[5]

Infrastructure investments are an especially cost-effective way to boost job creation with scare government funds. Economists James Feyrer and Bruce Sacerdote found for example that at the peak of the Recovery Act’s effect, 12.3 jobs were created for every $100,000 spent by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Energy—much of which was for infrastructure.[6] These two agencies spent $24.7 billion in Recovery dollars through September 2010, 82 percent of which was transportation spending. This implies a total of more than 3 million jobs created or saved.

### Global economic crisis causes war---strong statistical support—also causes great power transitions

Royal 10 – Jedediah Royal, Director of Cooperative Threat Reduction at the U.S. Department of Defense, 2010, “Economic Integration, Economic Signaling and the Problem of Economic Crises,” in Economics of War and Peace: Economic, Legal and Political Perspectives, ed. Goldsmith and Brauer, p. 213-214

Less intuitive is how periods of economic decline may increase the likelihood of external conflict. Political science literature has contributed a moderate degree of attention to the impact of economic decline and the security and defence behaviour of interdependent states. Research in this vein has been considered at systemic, dyadic and national levels. Several notable contributions follow. First, on the systemic level, Pollins (2008) advances Modelski and Thompson’s (1996) work on leadership cycle theory, finding that rhythms in the global economy are associated with the rise and fall of pre-eminent power and the often bloody transition from one pre-eminent leader to the next. As such, exogenous shocks such as economic crises could usher in a redistribution of relative power (see also Gilpin, 10981) that leads to uncertainty about power balances, increasing the risk of miscalculation (Fearon, 1995). Alternatively, even a relatively certain redistribution of power could lead to a permissive environment for conflict as a rising power may seek to challenge a declining power (Werner, 1999). Seperately, Polllins (1996) also shows that global economic cycles combined with parallel leadership cycles impact the likelihood of conflict among major, medium, and small powers, although he suggests that the causes

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and connections between global economic conditions and security conditions remain unknown. Second, on a dyadic level, Copeland’s (1996,2000) theory of trade expectations suggests that ‘future expectation of trade’ is a significant variable in understanding economic conditions and security behavior of states. He argues that interdependent states are likely to gain pacific benefits from trade so long as they have an optimistic view of future trade relations. However, if the expectation of future trade decline, particularly for difficult to replace items such as energy resources, the likelihood for conflict increases , as states will be inclined to use force to gain access to those resources. Crises could potentially be the trigger for decreased trade expectations either on its own or because it triggers protectionist moves by interdependent states. Third, others have considered the link between economic decline and external armed conflict at a national level. Blomberg and Hess (2002) find a strong correlation between internal conflict and external conflict, particularly during periods of economic downturn. They write, The linkages between internal and external conflict and prosperity are strong and mutually reinforcing. Economic conflict tends to spawn internal conflict, which in turn returns the favour. Moreover, the presence of a recession tends to amplify the extent to which international and external conflicts self-reinforce each other. (Blomberg & Hess, 2002, p.89). Economic decline has also been linked with an increase in the likelihood of terrorism (Blomberg, Hess, & Weerapana, 2004), which has the capacity to spill across borders and lead to external tensions. Furthermore, crises generally reduce the popularity of a sitting government. ‘Diversionary theory’ suggests that, when facing unpopularity arising from economic decline, sitting governments have increased incentives to create a ‘rally round the flag’ effect. Wang (1996), DeRouen (1995), and Blomberg, Hess and Thacker (2006) find supporting evidence showing that economic decline and use of force are at least indirectly correlated. Gelpi (1997) Miller (1999) and Kisanganie and Pickering (2009) suggest that the tendency towards diversionary tactics are greater for democratic states than autocratic states, due to the fact that democratic leaders are generally more susceptible to being removed from office due to lack of domestic support. DeRouen (2000) has provided evidence showing that periods of weak economic performance in the United States, and thus weak presidential popularity, are statistically linked to an increase in the use of force..

### Economic growth is vital to prevent the collapse of U.S. hegemony.

Khalilzad 11 — Zalmay Khalilzad, Counselor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, served as the United States ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the United Nations during the presidency of George W. Bush, served as the director of policy planning at the Defense Department during the Presidency of George H.W. Bush, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, 2011 “The Economy and National Security,” National Review, February 8th, http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/259024

Today, economic and fiscal trends pose the most severe long-term threat to the United States’ position as global leader. While the United States suffers from fiscal imbalances and low economic growth, the economies of rival powers are developing rapidly. The continuation of these two trends could lead to a shift from American primacy toward a multi-polar global system, leading in turn to increased geopolitical rivalry and even war among the great powers.

The current recession is the result of a deep financial crisis, not a mere fluctuation in the business cycle. Recovery is likely to be protracted. The crisis was preceded by the buildup over two decades of enormous amounts of debt throughout the U.S. economy — ultimately totaling almost 350 percent of GDP — and the development of credit-fueled asset bubbles, particularly in the housing sector. When the

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bubbles burst, huge amounts of wealth were destroyed, and unemployment rose to over 10 percent. The decline of tax revenues and massive countercyclical spending put the U.S. government on an unsustainable fiscal path. Publicly held national debt rose from 38 to over 60 percent of GDP in three years.

Without faster economic growth and actions to reduce deficits, publicly held national debt is projected to reach dangerous proportions. If interest rates were to rise significantly, annual interest payments — which already are larger than the defense budget — would crowd out other spending or require substantial tax increases that would undercut economic growth. Even worse, if unanticipated events trigger what economists call a “sudden stop” in credit markets for U.S. debt, the United States would be unable to roll over its outstanding obligations, precipitating a sovereign-debt crisis that would almost certainly compel a radical retrenchment of the United States internationally.

Such scenarios would reshape the international order. It was the economic devastation of Britain and France during World War II, as well as the rise of other powers, that led both countries to relinquish their empires. In the late 1960s, British leaders concluded that they lacked the economic capacity to maintain a presence “east of Suez.” Soviet economic weakness, which crystallized under Gorbachev, contributed to their decisions to withdraw from Afghanistan, abandon Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and allow the Soviet Union to fragment. If the U.S. debt problem goes critical, the United States would be compelled to retrench, reducing its military spending and shedding international commitments.

We face this domestic challenge while other major powers are experiencing rapid economic growth. Even though countries such as China, India, and Brazil have profound political, social, demographic, and economic problems, their economies are growing faster than ours, and this could alter the global distribution of power. These trends could in the long term produce a multi-polar world. If U.S. policymakers fail to act and other powers continue to grow, it is not a question of whether but when a new international order will emerge. The closing of the gap between the United States and its rivals could intensify geopolitical competition among major powers, increase incentives for local powers to play major powers against one another, and undercut our will to preclude or respond to international crises because of the higher risk of escalation.

The stakes are high. In modern history, the longest period of peace among the great powers has been the era of U.S. leadership. By contrast, multi-polar systems have been unstable, with their competitive dynamics resulting in frequent crises and major wars among the great powers. Failures of multi-polar international systems produced both world wars.

American retrenchment could have devastating consequences. Without an American security blanket, regional powers could rearm in an attempt to balance against emerging threats. Under this scenario, there would be a heightened possibility of arms races, miscalculation, or other crises spiraling into all-out conflict. Alternatively, in seeking to accommodate the stronger powers, weaker powers may shift their geopolitical posture away from the United States. Either way, hostile states would be emboldened to make aggressive moves in their regions.

As rival powers rise, Asia in particular is likely to emerge as a zone of great-power competition. Beijing’s economic rise has enabled a dramatic military buildup focused on acquisitions of naval, cruise, and ballistic missiles, long-range stealth aircraft, and anti-satellite capabilities. China’s strategic modernization is aimed, ultimately, at denying the United States access to the seas around China. Even as cooperative economic ties in the region have grown, China’s expansive territorial claims — and provocative statements and actions following crises in Korea and incidents at sea — have roiled its relations with South Korea, Japan, India, and Southeast Asian states. Still, the United States is the most significant barrier facing Chinese hegemony and aggression.

Given the risks, the United States must focus on restoring its economic and fiscal condition while checking and managing the rise of potential adversarial regional powers such as China. While we face significant challenges, the U.S. economy still accounts for over 20 percent of the world’s GDP. American institutions — particularly those providing enforceable rule of law — set it apart from all the rising powers. Social cohesion underwrites political stability. U.S. demographic trends are healthier than those of any other developed country. A culture of innovation, excellent institutions of higher education, and a vital sector of small and medium-sized enterprises propel the U.S. economy in ways difficult to quantify. Historically, Americans have responded pragmatically, and sometimes through trial and error, to work our way through the kind of crisis that we face today.

The policy question is how to enhance economic growth and employment while cutting discretionary spending in the near term and curbing the growth of entitlement spending in the out years. Republican members of Congress have outlined a plan. Several think tanks and commissions, including President Obama’s debt commission, have done so as well. Some consensus exists on measures to pare back the recent increases in domestic spending, restrain future growth in defense spending, and reform the tax code (by reducing tax expenditures while lowering individual and corporate rates). These are promising options.

The key remaining question is whether the president and leaders of both parties on Capitol Hill have the will to act and the skill to fashion bipartisan solutions. Whether we take the needed actions is a choice, however difficult it might be. It is clearly within our capacity to put our economy on a better trajectory. In garnering political support for cutbacks, the president and members of Congress should point not only to the domestic consequences of inaction — but also to the geopolitical implications.

As the United States gets its economic and fiscal house in order, it should take steps to prevent a flare-up in Asia. The United States can do so by signaling that its domestic challenges will not impede its intentions to check Chinese expansionism. This can be done in cost-efficient ways.

While China’s economic rise enables its military modernization and international assertiveness, it also frightens rival powers. The Obama administration has wisely moved to strengthen relations with allies and potential partners in the region but more can be done.

Some Chinese policies encourage other parties to join with the United States, and the U.S. should not let these opportunities pass. China’s military assertiveness should enable security cooperation with countries on China’s periphery — particularly Japan, India, and Vietnam — in ways that complicate Beijing’s strategic calculus. China’s mercantilist policies and currency manipulation — which harm developing states both in East Asia and elsewhere — should be used to fashion a coalition in favor of a more balanced trade system. Since Beijing’s over-the-top reaction to the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a Chinese democracy activist alienated European leaders, highlighting human-rights questions would not only draw supporters from nearby countries but also embolden reformers within China.

Since the end of the Cold War, a stable economic and financial condition at home has enabled America to have an expansive role in the world. Today we can no longer take this for granted. Unless we get our economic house in order, there is a risk that domestic stagnation in combination with the rise of rival powers will undermine our ability to deal with growing international problems. Regional hegemons in Asia could seize the moment, leading the world toward a new, dangerous era of multi-polarity.

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### US dominance is key to solve multiple hotspots that escalate to global war

Robert Kagan (Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Senior Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund) 2007 “End of Dreams, Return of History,” Hoover Institution, No. 144, August/September, http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136

 The jostling for status and influence among these ambitious nations and would-be nations is a second defining feature of the new post-Cold War international system. Nationalism in all its forms is back, if it ever went away, and so is international competition for power, influence, honor, and status. American predominance prevents these rivalries from intensifying — its regional as well as its global predominance. Were the United States to diminish its influence in the regions where it is currently the strongest power, the other nations would settle disputes as great and lesser powers have done in the past: sometimes through diplomacy and accommodation but often through confrontation and wars of varying scope, intensity, and destructiveness. One novel aspect of such a multipolar world is that most of these powers would possess nuclear weapons. That could make wars between them less likely, or it could simply make them more catastrophic.It is easy but also dangerous to underestimate the role the United States plays in providing a measure of stability in the world even as it also disrupts stability. For instance, the United States is the dominant naval power everywhere, such that other nations cannot compete with it even in their home waters. They either happily or grudgingly allow the United States Navy to be the guarantor of international waterways and trade routes, of international access to markets and raw materials such as oil. Even when the United States engages in a war, it is able to play its role as guardian of the waterways. In a more genuinely multipolar world, however, it would not. Nations would compete for naval dominance at least in their own regions and possibly beyond. Conflict between nations would involve struggles on the oceans as well as on land. Armed embargos, of the kind used in World War i and other major conflicts, would disrupt trade flows in a way that is now impossible. Such order as exists in the world rests not merely on the goodwill of peoples but on a foundation provided by American power. Even the European Union, that great geopolitical miracle, owes its founding to American power, for without it the European nations after World War ii would never have felt secure enough to reintegrate Germany. Most Europeans recoil at the thought, but even today Europe ’s stability depends on the guarantee, however distant and one hopes unnecessary, that the United States could step in to check any dangerous development on the continent. In a genuinely multipolar world, that would not be possible without renewing the danger of world war. People who believe greater equality among nations would be preferable to the present American predominance often succumb to a basic logical fallacy. They believe the order the world enjoys today exists independently of American power. They imagine that in a world where American power was diminished, the aspects of international order that they like would remain in place. But that ’s not the way it works. International order does not rest on ideas and institutions. It is shaped by configurations of power. The international order we know today reflects the distribution of power in the world since World War ii, and especially since the end of the Cold War. A different configuration of power, a multipolar world in which the poles were Russia, China, the United States, India, and Europe, would produce its own kind of order, with different rules and norms reflecting the interests of the powerful states that would have a hand in shaping it. Would that international order be an improvement? Perhaps for Beijing and Moscow it would. But it is doubtful that it would suit the tastes of enlightenment liberals in the United States and Europe. The current order, of course, is not only far from perfect but also offers no guarantee against major conflict among the world ’s great powers. Even under the umbrella of unipolarity, regional conflicts involving the large powers may erupt. War could erupt between China and Taiwan and draw in both the United States and Japan. War could erupt between Russia and Georgia, forcing the United States and its European allies to decide whether to intervene or suffer the consequences of a Russian victory. Conflict between India and Pakistan remains possible, as does conflict between Iran and Israel or other Middle Eastern states. These, too, could draw in other great powers, including the United States. Such conflicts may be unavoidable no matter what policies the United States pursues. But they are more likely to erupt if the United States weakens or withdraws from its positions of regional dominance. This is especially true in East Asia, where most nations agree that a reliable American power has a stabilizing and pacific effect on the region. That is certainly the view of most of China ’s neighbors. But even China, which seeks gradually to supplant the United States as the dominant power in the region, faces the dilemma that an American withdrawal could unleash an ambitious, independent, nationalist Japan. In Europe, too, the departure of the United States from the scene — even if it remained the world’s most powerful nation — could be destabilizing. It could tempt Russia to an even more overbearing and potentially forceful approach to unruly nations on

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its periphery. Although some realist theorists seem to imagine that the disappearance of the Soviet Union put an end to the possibility of confrontation between Russia and the West, and therefore to the need for a permanent American role in Europe, history suggests that conflicts in Europe involving Russia are possible even without Soviet communism. If the United States withdrew from Europe — if it adopted what some call a strategy of “offshore balancing” — this could in time increase the likelihood of conflict involving Russia and its near neighbors, which could in turn draw the United States back in under unfavorable circumstances. It is also optimistic to imagine that a retrenchment of the American position in the Middle East and the assumption of a more passive, “offshore” role would lead to greater stability there. The vital interest the United States has in access to oil and the role it plays in keeping access open to other nations in Europe and Asia make it unlikely that American leaders could or would stand back and hope for the best while the powers in the region battle it out. Nor would a more “even-handed” policy toward Israel, which some see as the magic key to unlocking peace, stability, and comity in the Middle East, obviate the need to come to Israel ’s aid if its security became threatened. That commitment, paired with the American commitment to protect strategic oil supplies for most of the world, practically ensures a heavy American military presence in the region, both on the seas and on the ground. The subtraction of American power from any region would not end conflict but would simply change the equation. In the Middle East, competition for influence among powers both inside and outside the region has raged for at least two centuries. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism doesn ’t change this. It only adds a new and more threatening dimension to the competition, which neither a sudden end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians nor an immediate American withdrawal from Iraq would change. The alternative to American predominance in the region is not balance and peace. It is further competition. The region and the states within it remain relatively weak. A diminution of American influence would not be followed by a diminution of other external influences. One could expect deeper involvement by both China and Russia, if only to secure their interests. 18 And one could also expect the more powerful states of the region, particularly Iran, to expand and fill the vacuum. It is doubtful that any American administration would voluntarily take actions that could shift the balance of power in the Middle East further toward Russia, China, or Iran. The world hasn ’t changed that much. An American withdrawal from Iraq will not return things to “normal” or to a new kind of stability in the region. It will produce a new instability, one likely to draw the United States back in again.

### Sustaining economic growth is vital to generate the resources needed to solve multiple global problems, like environmental destruction, disease, and other conflicts.

Silk 93 — Leonard Silk, Distinguished Professor of Economics at Pace University, Senior Research Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and former Economics Columnist with the New York Times, 1993 (“Dangers of Slow Growth,” Foreign Affairs)

Like the Great Depression, the current economic slump has fanned the firs of nationalist, ethnic and religious hatred around the world. Economic hardship is not the only cause of these social and political pathologies, but it aggravates all of them, and in turn they feed back on economic development. They also undermine efforts to deal with such global problems as environmental pollution, the production and trafficking of drugs, crime, sickness, famine, AIDS and other plagues.

Growth will not solve all those problems by itself. But economic growth – and growth alone – creates the additional resources that make it possible to achieve such fundamental goals as higher living standards, national and collective security, a healthier environment, and more liberal and open economies and societies

## Inherency – Bridge programs failing

### SQ investment levels will make bridge collapses inevitable – hurting the economy and impeding commerce.

AASHTO, American Association of State Highway 2010 “Bridging the gap” http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/facing-facts.html

An increasing number of states are concluding that a decline in the quality of their bridge inventory will be inevitable if additional investments are not made. To protect the public, states will be forced to put weight limits on many bridges and close others outright unless they can fund the necessary investment levels. These closures and postings will impede commerce and decrease the effi ciency of the nation’s transportation network.

### Federal bridge programs are failing; growth in aging bridges preventing success.

Lilly Shoup, Nick Donohue and Marisa Lang March 30 2011 The Fix We’re In For: The State of Our Nation’s Bridges TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA the largest, most diverse coalition working on trans¬portation reform today http://t4america.org/docs/bridgereport/bridgereport-national.pdf

For years, the federal government has run a special bridge repair program, but a combination of the program’s shortcomings and the sheer growth in aging bridges has prevented its success. Between 1992 and 2010, the number of vehicles traveling across structurally deficient bridges declined just 2 percent, despite billions of dollars spent annually on bridge construction and repair.4

## Harms – Bridges are structurally deficient

### The number of bridges that are deficient is high now and on the rise

American Society of Civil Engineers (represents more than 140,000 members of the civil engineering profession worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society) “America’s Infrastructure Report Card” 2009

Usually built to last 50 years, the average bridge in our country is now 43 years old. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, of the 600,905 bridges across the country as of December 2008, 72,868 (12.1%) were categorized as structurally deficient and 89,024 (14.8%) were categorized as functionally obsolete. From 2005–2008, the number of deficient (structurally deficient plus functionally obsolete) bridges in rural areas declined by 8,596. However, in urban areas during the same time frame, there was an increase of 2,817 deficient bridges.2 Put another way, in 2008 approximately one in four rural bridges were deficient, while one in three urban bridges were deficient. The urban impact is quite significant given the higher level of passenger and freight traffic.

### The number of structurally deficient bridges is greater than the number of McDonald’s locations.

Matt Sledge 18,000 Busy Bridges Are Structurally Deficient, New Study Says 2011 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/20/18000-busy-bridges-structurally-deficient\_n\_1022611.html

Bridges built during the post-World War II boom years are facing an increasingly urgent need for repair. Some 210 million trips are taken every day on structurally deficient bridges in our biggest cities, according to a new report. There are so many of those creaky bridges that they even outnumber McDonald's locations, 18,000 to 14,000. A spokesman at Transportation for America, the nonprofit advocacy group that mined federal statistics to write the report, said it should serve as a "wake-up call."

### Recent disasters underscore that bridges are structurally deficient.

Calvin L. Scovel III (Inspector General) “INSPECTOR GENERAL'S FY 2008 TOP MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES” DOT, November 17 2007

Recent fatal infrastructure failures underscore the significance of bridge and tunnel safety as major challenges. In 2006, ceiling panels collapsed in a tunnel in Boston’s Central Artery/Tunnel Project, killing a motorist. In 2007, the catastrophic failure of the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis killed 13 people. These tragic incidents brought renewed national attention to the safety of our bridges and tunnels. Shortly after each of these tragedies, we initiated audits to assess whether FHWA is exercising adequate oversight to help ensure public safety. FHWA must strengthen its oversight approach so that it proactively identifies safety risks, which presents an enormous oversight challenge. Specifically, of the nearly 600,000 bridges across the country, approximately 72,500 are structurally deficient.14 Further, bridges that are classified as structurally deficient can have an array of significant problems (see figure 7-1 below).

## Harms – Bridges are structurally deficient

### 1 out of 4 bridges is structurally deficient.

Calvin L. Scovel III (Inspector General) “INSPECTOR GENERAL'S FY 2008 TOP MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES” DOT, November 17 2007

Fatal infrastructure failures in 2006 and 2007 have focused attention on obsolescence in the Nation’s aging surface transportation infrastructure and the need to strengthen oversight. The Department must work with states and localities to ensure the safety of our bridges and restore or replace those that present the highest risk of catastrophic failure.This task will be challenging because, according to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the average bridge in the United States is 43 years old, and almost one in four bridges is either structurally deficient and in need of repair or functionally obsolete and too narrow for today’s traffic volumes.13 To its credit, the Department has taken action. For example, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has agreed to transition to data-driven, risk-based bridge oversight to target those bridges most in need of increased attention. This year, the Department must focus management attention on two key challenges: • FHWA must strengthen its efforts to ensure safety for bridges and tunnels and hold states accountable for Federal funds. • The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must work with state and local transit agencies to identify ways to repair, rehabilitate, or replace aging transit systems.

### Missouri ranks 7th in worst condition of bridges – at least 122 are rates structurally deficient.

Eli Yokley– September 16, 2011 In Missouri, scores of federal bridges ‘structurally deficient’

http://politicmo.com/2011/09/16/in-missouri-scores-of-federal-bridges-structurally-deficient/

In Missouri alone, 122 bridges within the national highway system are ranked “structurally deficient,” meaning they need significant repair, rehabilitation, or replacement. Broken down by congressional district, more than half of those bridges are in districts occupied by U.S. Representatives who have expressed opposition to the president’s plan.In Rep. Sam Graves’ sixth congressional district, 30 bridges are ranked structurally deficient, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. In Rep. Joann Emerson’s eighth congressional district, 21 bridges are ranked structurally deficient. In Rep. Vicky Hartzler’s fourth congressional district, there are 18.Of bridges not in the national system, the statistics are alarming. Missouri ranks 7th nationally in terms of worst overall condition of bridges, with 17 percent of bridges ranked structurally deficient, according to statistics assembled by Transportation for America, a group working to highlight infrastructure projects nationwide.

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### Bridge investment is key to global economic competitiveness

Dennis Slater, 2012. Slater is President and secretary of the AEM. “Highway Bill Equals Jobs, Better Roads, Bridges” <http://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/Highway-Bill-Equals-Jobs-Better-Roads-Bridges/13658//>//jt

As is always the case with transportation issues, there is more to building better roads and bridges than the very important matters of time and safety for U.S. drivers. There also is global economic competitiveness. Funding gaps as the one described above put Minnesota and the rest of the United States at a disadvantage in the global marketplace. Emerging markets seem to “get it,” even if we don’t. According to research issued late last year, China invests nine percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) in infrastructure versus 0.93 percent for the United States. In August The Economist said China’s stimulus package (reportedly $586 billion) is at least 13 to 15 percent of its GDP, and possibly 18 percent. The U.S. “$787 billion stimulus package amounts to 5.5 percentage of its GDP,” and only $27 billion has been designated for transportation infrastructure. If the United States is going to remain the world’s economic leader, our investment in roads and bridges will have to increase accordingly. Now, about those jobs. With a national unemployment rate of nearly 10 percent, workers would only benefit from infrastructure investment. Many experts contend that infrastructure investment is superior for creating jobs and economic stimulus. A recent study by the USDOT estimates that for every $1 billion invested in U.S. infrastructure, nearly 35,000 jobs are created, and a University of Maryland analysis demonstrated that every $100 invested in infrastructure returns $350 to the economy. By funding the highway bill, Congress would actually be funding a jobs bill that would help keep one vital manufacturing sector operating in the United States. The companies my association represents in the construction equipment manufacturing industry are experiencing a depression, not a recession. Upwards of 40 percent of those working in this manufacturing sector have lost their jobs in this downturn, so this industry needs a fully-funded highway bill now. The simplest way to explain the importance of the federal highway bill to the construction equipment industry is this: a fully-funded highway bill will promote significant long-term funding and planning for serious construction projects, such as new bridges, new roads and other infrastructure improvements. Long-term planning means construction contractors have market certainty and can afford to buy new equipment. The more the bill is postponed, the harder it is for contractors to bid and plan for significant long-term construction projects, which leads to additional job losses. Washington had an opportunity with the stimulus package earlier this year to adequately fund badly needed infrastructure improvements. Unfortunately, D.C.’s leadership did not choose to spend stimulus dollars to improve our failing infrastructure, or build it as is the case in China. As often happens with Washington, things have not turned out as promised. However, by funding the highway bill, Washington would send the right signal by helping a vital manufacturing industry. By fully-funding a federal highway bill, Congress would boost U.S. economic well-being and competitiveness. Washington needs to hear that the country needs the shorter extension, and that all infrastructure funding options must be considered: Toll roads, user fees, a gasoline tax, public private partnerships, bonds, sales, etc. A legislative deadline for the highway bill is looming on Oct. 31. Congress must either decide in favor of a long-term plan to improve our neglected roads, that creates thousands of good paying sustainable jobs, or to stay in a holding pattern. Congress can put the construction industry back to work, or it can continue to delay much-needed legislation. Americans deserve quick action by Congress to provide the needed funding for safe and efficient roads, bridges and highways.

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### Maintaining bridges is key to economic competitiveness; the longer we put it off the more it will cost.

Catherine Harris is the Economics Editor at Investment Executive, “New infrastructure will require US$30 trillion to be spent by 2030”, October 2007, <http://www.investmentexecutive.com/back-issue-details/-/asset_publisher/ckhOCmynNQq8/content/news-41164>

Most industrialized countries have underspent on infrastructure since the 1970s. The recent collapse of bridges in the U.S. and Canada underlines the safety issue. The U.S. Federal Highway Administration estimates that 31% of U.S. bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, says Fee, and that it will cost $19.4 billion a year to fix them. Markova notes that the U.S. built 144,000 miles of new highways in 1960-65 but only 59,000 miles in 2000-05. The American Society of Civil Engineers has assigned an average grade of “D” to the U.S.’s infrastructure. Smith points to estimates that 25% of Canadian treated water disappears through leakage. Many of North America’s ports are already operating at slightly less than a 90% utilization rate and demand is rising by the equivalent of one Vancouver-sized port a year, according to CIBC World Markets. Because decaying infrastructure is “out of sight, out of mind,” says Smith, it is easy to put off spending. But globalization and safety issues are forcing countries to pay attention. If infrastructure is failing, their companies lose competitiveness and market share. Cities become congested, bridges collapse and natural disasters such as hurricanes leave a trail of destruction. The longer governments put off repairing and updating infrastructure, the more it will cost. It’s like a roof, says Smith: if you don’t fix individual shingles that need repairing, you have to replace the whole roof in 10 years.

### Bridges are vital links to economic recovery and maintenance of the multimodal transportation system.

Kavinoky, Janet SEPTEMBER 5, 2007 Executive Director, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Americans for Transportation Mobility “Congressional Hearing on STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGES IN THE UNITED STATES” http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg37652/html/CHRG-110hhrg37652.htm

Today, your Committee meets at a time when the Nation's attention is focused squarely on infrastructure, but under the worst possible circumstances. Now is the time to move on a robust, thoughtful, and comprehensive plan to build, maintain, and fund a world-class 21st century transportation system. We cannot afford to delay. If we fail to address our challenges we will lose jobs and industries to other nations. If we fail to act, we will pollute our air and destroy the free, mobile way of life that we cherish. And ultimately if we fail to increase investment, we will see more senseless deaths on our bridges and roads, not to mention on our rails and waterways. It is likely to get much worse if we do not act. We have a system that is overworked, underfunded, increasingly unsafe and without a strategic vision. Bridges are the critical links in the multimodal system that moves goods and people. And, Mr. Chairman, the Chamber applauds you for your leadership in proposing a strong plan to address the Nation's deficient bridges. Ms. Kavinoky. After the tragic collapse in Minneapolis, we all became acutely aware of the magnitude of the problem. Today, one quarter of our Nation's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and that figure does not include 16 percent of elevated transit structures that are in substandard condition or worse. In addition to the painfully obvious safety concerns, there is an economic impact. Take bridges in Oregon, for example. The Oregon DOT says that the potential economic impact of structurally deficient bridges in that State alone could be $123 billion

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over the next 25 years. Mr. Chairman, we support your proposal to identify needs first and then to tackle the backlog of bridge maintenance through a formula funding approach without earmarks and with improved oversight. This is the right way to do the job. The Chamber also encourages the Committee to address the shortcomings in current law. We strongly support holding States accountable for the expenditure of the resources provided in SAFETEA-LU. Without addressing the current diversion of bridge dollars to other Federal funding categories, new programs may essentially create a substitution effect, rather than increasing the funding dedicated to bridge needs.

### Bridges key to econ – specifically the trucking and freight industries rely on quick movement of goods.

Lynch, Tim SEPTEMBER 5, 2007 Senior Vice President, American Trucking Association “Congressional Hearing on STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGES IN THE UNITED STATES” http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg37652/html/CHRG-110hhrg37652.htm

Mr. Lynch. Thank you very much, Chairman Oberstar, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Duncan. We appreciate the invitation for the American Trucking Associations to testify on the condition of the Nation's infrastructure and bridges. Members of this Committee well understand the importance of the Nation's infrastructure. It is unfortunate that it took the tragic collapse of the Interstate 35W bridge to focus the public and, perhaps more importantly, the media's attention on the vulnerabilities of the highway system. We must not lose this opportunity to educate the American people about the very real safety and economic consequences of failing to adequately maintain and improve the system. We thank you for providing a forum that will help to inform the debate and that will hopefully move us toward an agreement on solutions to the challenges we face. The trucking industry and the highway system that supports it are the lynch pins of the Nation's freight transportation system. The industry hauls 69 percent of the freight by volume and 84 percent by revenue. In addition, the trucking industry plays an important role in the movement of intermodal rail, air, and water freight. Truck tonnage is projected to increase, reaching toward the 14-billion-ton mark by the year 2017. This growth, of course, means that a lot more trucks will be on the road. We estimate another 2.7 million trucks will be needed to serve the Nation's economy, or a 40 percent increase. A reliable network of highways is crucial to our industry's ability to deliver goods safely, efficiently and on schedule. Since deregulation and the completion of the interstate highway system over the previous quarter century, the trucking industry has made continuous improvements that have allowed its customers to significantly reduce inventories and to create manufacturing and supply chain efficiencies that have saved the U.S. economy billions of dollars, increased salaries, slowed consumer price increases, and created innumerable jobs. Any disruption to the movement of freight on our Nation's highway system can well jeopardize those gains. Mr. Chairman, our highway and infrastructure is a network of roads, bridges and tunnels that link our Nation together. That network includes superstructures like the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the previously mentioned today Woodrow Wilson Bridge that are vital links in moving people and goods. However, that system also includes bridges over creeks and streams that may only carry a few cars and trucks on any given day. Both are important and both need to be maintained. But tragedies like the I-35 bridge collapse highlight how vulnerable our system is when a structure on a major highway is damaged, closed or loadposted. The resulting traffic disruptions distress local and regional economies due to higher freight rates and lost business opportunities. Significant costs are also incurred due to lost time, wasted fuel by sitting in congestion and by having to divert to alternate routes.

## Bridge investment creates jobs

### Maintenance of bridges is one of the most effective ways to put Americans back to work.

Donna Cooper (Senior Fellow with the Economic Policy team at American Progress. Formerly the deputy mayor for policy for Philadelphia and secretary of policy and planning for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) “Repairing Bridges Can Lift Families Out of Poverty” Center For American Progress, September 27 2011

New data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that one out of every six Americans lived in poverty in 2010, 3 million more than in 2009. A more up to date snapshot of just how bad things are can be found in the August employment numbers—zero jobs added. That eye-popping statistic suggests that poverty numbers for 2011 might surpass the depressing 2010 findings on poverty released last week. To address the desperate need for jobs, help lift people from poverty, and meet the needs of keeping our roads, bridges, and transit systems safe, President Obama introduced theAmerican Jobs Act, which would invest $50 billion in critical infrastructure improvements. This proposal mirrors the successful strategy of infrastructure investments made under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which invested nearly $50 billion in infrastructure that put as many as three-quarters of a million Americans to work. The president’s jobs legislation again taps the investment power of the government to stimulate private-sector business growth. Rebuilding America’s crumbling roads and bridges is one of the most effective ways to put Americans back to work. There areapproximately 150,000 bridges in America that are either “structurally deficient” or “functionally obsolete,” according to the Federal Highway Administration. At the current rate of investment it will take decades to bring these bridges into a state of good repair. Instead of waiting for more bridges to fall down we can make the kind of investments that helped make America great and will help put Americans back to work. Table 1 shows the top 10 states with the most bridges needing work.

### Bridge repairs create thousands of jobs immediately

NACO(National Association of Counties) 2009, "Fixing it: Infrastructure and the Economy", http://www.naco.org/research/pubs/Documents/Surveys/Research%20Surveys/Fixing%20It%20Infrastructure%20and%20the%20Economy.pdf.

When asked if additional funding would help create jobs in their counties, 91 percent of

responding county engineers said yes. Only 9 percent replied that funding would not help or that they did not know. FHWA estimates indicate that for every $1 billion of funding that is invested in road and bridge construction 27,823 jobs are created. More than 13,800 jobs are generally direct jobs for on-site construction and direct and indirect suppliers. More than 13,900 jobs are induced positions, which are those created by the expenditures of the new full time workers

## Bridge investment necessary to solve congestion

Bridges have the largest effect on congestion

AASHTO, American Association of State Highway 2010 “Bridging the gap” http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/facing-facts.html

The Nation Cannot Fix Its Congestion Problems Without Fixing Its Bridge Problems. The nation’s bridges have become chokepoints on the country’s freeway system, particularly at interchanges and major river crossings. Between 1995 and 2004 annual travel on the Interstate Highway System grew by 28 percent, at the same time that the system was expanded by only one-half of one percent. Truck travel nearly doubled in the past 20 years and is projected to double again by 2035, adding significantly more loads to the already heavily traveled bridge system Most of the nation’s traffi c and the vast majority of its truck freight, travel on the nation’s major routes—the Interstate Highway System, the National Highway System and the urban freeways. The NHS represents only 4 percent of the nation’s busiest roads and bridges, but carries 40 percent of all traffi c and 75 percent of heavy truck traffi c.

### No way to fix congestion until we first deal with bridges.

AASHTO, American Association of State Highway 2010 “Bridging the gap” http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/facing-facts.html

The nation cannot fix its congestion problems without fixing its bridge problems. The nation’s bridges have become chokepoints on the country’s freeway system, particularly at interchanges and major river crossings. The top 10 highway interchange bottlenecks cause an average of 1.5 million truck hours of delay each year. Much of the cost to improve highway interchanges is directly related to the construction of bridges and overpasses that separate and elevate lanes of traffic.

### Failure to invest in bridges causes congestion, which hurts the economy and the environment

Jeffrey M Perloff, “Microeconomics 6th Edition: For Whom the Bridge Tolls”, 2011, http://wps.aw.com/bp\_perloff\_microecon\_6/180/46080/11796701.cw/content/index.html

If anyone can drive across it, a bridge is a common property. Excessive use of a bridge leads to congestion. The most congested bridge in the United States is the 8.5-mile-long San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in California. Of the 275,000 vehicles that drive across the bridge in a day, 100,000 cross it westbound during the morning peak commuting hours, 6 to 10 A.M. The bridge can handle only about 10,000 commuters per hour in one direction without congestion. The Bay Bridge morning traffic jam is costly in terms of time, money, and pollution. Commuters wasted an average 11 1/2 days stuck in traffic in 2000. Drivers frequently wait 20 minutes or more just to get on the bridge. More time is lost crawling across the bridge at low speed. Gasoline is wasted, and tailpipe pollution is 250% greater under these congested conditions than when cars drive at the speed limit. According to some estimates, traffic congestion costs San Francisco Bay Area commuters more than $3 billion annually, or $1,000 per driver in lost productivity and wasted fuel. In addition, congestion raises vehicle emissions and increases smog.

## Bridge investment necessary to solve congestion

### Congestion harms the economy and the environment

Finance Commission 2003 http://financecommission.dot.gov/Documents/Background%20Documents/ch6-erp07.pdf

The Cost of Congestion Over time, slowing traffic exacts heavy costs on drivers. On average, congestion caused 47 hours of delay for U.S. commuters and commercial truck drivers in 85 urban areas during peak hours in 2003. For America’s 13 largest cities, this number is much higher: 61 hours. Extra fuel is consumed on congested roads because of the effect that waiting in stop-andgo traffic has on fuel economy. In 2003, sitting in traffic wasted about 2.3 billion gallons of fuel, or almost 1.4 percent of all fuel consumed by lightduty and commercial vehicles that year. Waiting in traffic can also increase the cumulative amount of pollution emitted from a vehicle’s tailpipe, which contributes to poor air quality and more greenhouse gas emissions. Aggregating over the 85 most congested U.S. cities, the cost of time wasted in traffic and extra fuel consumed by commuters and commercial truck drivers due to congestion is estimated to have exceeded $63 billion in 2003 (see Table 6-1). In Los Angeles, the city with the worst congestion, the fuel and time cost of waiting in traffic was calculated to be almost $1,600 per traveler in 2003. In Philadelphia, congestion is noticeably less than in Los Angeles, but the estimated cost to travelers is still high: $641 per traveler per year. In addition, businesses that rely on regular and on-time delivery of supplies have begun to maintain larger inventories to safeguard against unanticipated delays caused by congestion. A recent study conducted by the Department of Transportation confirms that congestion has resulted in higher transportation prices and less reliable pickup and delivery times for freight.

### Bridge deficiencies cause traffic congestion

American Moving and Storage Association, “Improve Highway and Bridge Infrastructure and Reduce Congestion Through a Strong Federal Program With Adequate Funding”, http://www.promover.org/files/govtaffairs/policy\_papers/pp\_highway.pdf, NO DATE

Increased congestion, limited capacity, and deteriorating highways and bridges are hindering commerce on the National Highway System (NHS), including the movement of household goods. At the same time, future federal highway funding is threatened by the pending insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). Background Traffic congestion is a major and growing nationwide problem. Congestion is becoming worse in every one of the Nation’s 437 urban areas. The condition of our roads and bridges is deteriorating. For example, 33% of the roads on the National Highway System are in poor or mediocre condition and 26% of America’s bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Balances in the highway account of the Highway Trust Fund have been declining since 2000, and emergency supplemental funding was required in 2008 to keep the HTF afloat.

## Solvency

### Significant new investment is necessary to eliminate dangerous bridges.

Transportation for America, March 30, 2011, “New report highlights mounting challenge of aging bridges”, http://t4america.org/pressers/2011/03/30/new-report-highlights-mounting-challenge-of-aging-bridges/

Nearly 70,000 bridges nationwide are rated “structurally deficient” and are in need of substantial repair or replacement, according to federal data. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) estimates that the backlog of potentially dangerous bridges would cost $70.9 billion to eliminate, while the federal outlay for bridges amounts to slightly more than $5 billion per year.

### America’s bridges are failing—investment key to solve (additional 17 billion annually)

American Society of Civil Engineers (represents more than 140,000 members of the civil engineering profession worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society) “America’s Infrastructure Report Card” 2009

More than 26%, or one in four, of the nation’s bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. While some progress has been made in recent years to reduce the number of deficient and obsolete bridges in rural areas, the number in urban areas is rising. A $17 billion annual investment is needed to substantially improve current bridge conditions. Currently, only $10.5 billion is spent annually on the construction and maintenance of bridges.

### 65 billion dollars necessary to deal with the existing backlog of bridge repairs.

AASHTO, American Association of State Highway 2010 “Bridging the gap” http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/facing-facts.html

The U.S. DOT’s Conditions and Performance Report estimated the existing backlog of investment needs for bridges was approximately $65 billion. In other words, “$65 billion could be invested immediately in a cost-benefi cial fashion to replace or otherwise address currently existing bridge

defi ciencies.” At the $10.5 billion spending level in 2004—the backlog should have been reduced by about half over 20 years.

## A2 Spending

### Infrastructure spending is the best way to stimulate the economy – comparative to deficit spending.

Robert H Frank, Forget Stimulus, Let’s Talk Savings Sep 8, 2011 7:29 PM EDT http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/09/08/gop-budget-obstructionists-must-talk-sensibly-about-the-cost-of-what-needs-fixing.html

Their basic claim is that if government spends more now, deficits will rise, and that will impoverish our grandchildren. With unemployment still hovering above 9 percent, this is wrongheaded in multiple ways. But obstructionists are unmoved by the standard Keynesian arguments that experienced policy economists take for granted. Repeating those arguments won’t help. Advocates for stimulus need to change the conversation, and the best way to do that is to focus on specific jobs that need to be done. One example comes from the Nevada Department of Transportation, which describes a 10-mile stretch of Interstate 80 badly in need of repair. If the job were done today, they report, it could be accomplished for $6 million. But if it’s delayed for just two years, weather and traffic will eat more deeply into the roadbed, boosting the job’s cost to $30 million. That huge difference ignores the fact that many workers capable of doing the work are currently unemployed. If we wait, we’ll need to bid many of them away from other productive tasks. Much of the equipment required for the job is also sitting idle. The required materials are now extremely cheap on world markets. And the interest rates to finance the work are at record lows. Even apart from the need to stimulate employment, the case for doing the work right away is a complete no-brainer.

### Infrastructure spending will boost the economy, create jobs, and allow us to compete. Now is by far the best time to invest – comparative to spending da

Kevin Drum 9-2-11 My Jobs Plan: A Trillion Dollars For Infrastructure http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2011/09/trillion-dollars-infrastructure

All of this is common knowledge. What's also common knowledge is that manufactured outrage over the deficit aside, the federal government can currently borrow money for free. Actually, it's even better than that: It can borrow money at negative interest rates. If we want to upgrade our national infrastructure, there's no better time to do it than right now. As Dartmouth professor Matthew Slaughter puts it, "There is a crucial connection between potholes and unemployment." Repairing our infrastructure will put people to work during a long and seemingly unending economic slump; it will provide us with the capital stock we need to compete on the world stage in the future; and it will cost us less now than it ever will again. It's a no-brainer.

## A2 Spending

### Infrastructure investment boosts US competitiveness.

Harold L. Sirkin on June 25, 2012 Improving America’s Competitiveness http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-06-25/improving-america-s-competitiveness

Expanding and modernizing America’s infrastructure is an investment, not consumption. It not only creates economic value—it improves U.S. competitiveness.Most Americans take these things for granted until there are problems: Carcinogens show up in our drinking water; the air traffic control system hiccups, tying up air traffic; a highway bridge collapses; New York City experiences a blackout. Then they notice. The Chinese understand how important it is to get there from here. As a consequence, they’re investing heavily in infrastructure, adding a reported 56 new airports in the next five years alone and 186,000 miles of new roads, among other assets.Roads, bridges, ports, airports, air traffic control, and electricity and information distribution systems don’t maintain and expand themselves. Washington must make them a priority. The longer we wait, the more it will cost.

### Acting now is necessary to avoid future increased cost to the economy.

Ari Bloomekatz, October 20th, 2011, LA TIMES, “L.A. Area home to dozens of deficient bridges, report finds”, http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/20/local/la-me-bad-bridges-20111020

Most of the county's bridges were built in the 1950s and '60s with roughly 50- to 60-year life spans; putting off repairs will only multiply future expenses and could prove dangerous, he said. The report also showed that Pittsburgh — where 30.4% of the bridges are classified as structurally deficient — leads all metropolitan areas with more than 2 million people. San Francisco ranked second with 20.9%, Sacramento was fourth with 15.4%, followed by Riverside with 12.2%. Martin Wachs, director of transportation, space and technology at the Santa Monica-based Rand Corp., said infrastructure repair serves as a fast way to create jobs but that securing funding can be tough and unpopular. "Politically there's almost no obvious reward for fixing something before it collapses as opposed to building something new," Wachs said. "We constantly turn our backs on the importance of our infrastructure.... Eventually when we face the music, it's going to cost more and it's going to be more difficult and complex," he said.

## A2 States CP

### States cannot keep up without federal support.

Lilly Shoup, Nick Donohue and Marisa Lang March 30 2011 The Fix We’re In For: The State of Our Nation’s Bridges TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA the largest, most diverse coalition working on trans¬portation reform today http://t4america.org/docs/bridgereport/bridgereport-national.pdf

States Cannot Keep Up Without Federal Support Bridges provide crucial access between regions and cities, linking workers to jobs, goods to markets and people to essential services. According to the FHWA, transportation agencies would need $70.9 billion to overcome the current backlog of deficient bridges. This investment would be money well spent, as poor bridge conditions have major implications for traveler safety, mobility and economic activity.Allowing roads and bridges to slip into disrepair ultimately costs state and local governments billions more than the cost of regular, timely repair. Over a 25-year period, deferring maintenance of bridges and highways can cost three times as much as preventative repairs. The backlog also increases safety risks, hinders economic prosperity and significantly burdens taxpayers.Preservation efforts can also extend the expected service life of a road for an additional 18 years, preventing the need for major reconstruction or replacement. In addition to the safety imperative, investing in the construction, expansion and repair of our nation’s transportation infrastructure creates jobs today while laying the foundation for long-term economic prosperity. Repair work on roads and bridges generates 16 percent more jobs than construction of new bridges and roads.For all these reasons, Congress has repeatedly declared the condition and safety of our bridges to be of national significance. However, the current federal program does not ensure transportation agencies have enough money and accountability to get the job done..

### States empirically fail to properly allocate bridge money in the status quo.

Michael Fielding “Nation's failing bridges in spotlight” Public Works news service, January 13 2010

Despite spending more than ever on maintenance, states face difficult budget decisions as one quarter of the nation's bridges are deficient or functionally obsolete, according to Reason Foundation's 18thAnnual Highway Report. "This shows the difficulties states are having when it comes to making across-the-board progress in road conditions," explains David Hartgen, lead author of the nonprofit think tank's report. "In many cases, we see two steps forward, one step back." The number of deficient bridges had declined for 22 consecutive years. But in 2007 (the latest year for which figures are available), 151,101 bridges were deficient and/or functionally obsolete, a 1% increase over 2006. The trend continued into 2009; in the two worst states, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, more than half of all bridges need improvement. Arizona reported the lowest percentage of deficient bridges at nearly 11%, while Rhode Island reported the highest at 53%.The highest-percentage states are primarily in the northeast, where the structures are among the oldest in the nation. Maine, for example, fell six slots from 22th to 28nd from 2006 to 2007 because of worsening conditions on rural arterials. Ironically, maintenance expenditures increased faster than the rate of deterioration, from $17 billion to $20 billion; and account for 18% of state highway budgets. Administrative costs rose from $7 billion to $8 billion, accounting for more than 7% of spending. Capital improvements represent 57%. Total highway maintenance spending jumped 17% between 2006 and 2007, although capital investment in bridges increased from $54 billion to nearly $63 billion, a 15% increase

## A2 States CP

### States have funding shortages which prevent their ability to successfully invest in preventative bridge maintenance.

AASHTO, American Association of State Highway 2010 “Bridging the gap” http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/facing-facts.html

State departments of transportation are responsible for maintaining almost half of the nation’s bridges. Yet even with inspections, improved materials, and ingenious repairs, nearly every state faces funding shortages that will prevent them from ongoing, stable investment in preventive maintenance, repair, and replacement. When repair is impossible, load limits and closings are the only options to ensure the public’s safety, which, in turn lead to added congestion, delays, and hardships for those living at either side

### States don’t have the money to properly fix bridges.

AASHTO, American Association of State Highway 2010 “Bridging the gap” http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/facing-facts.html

Nearly every state faces funding shortages that prevent them from ongoing, stable investment in preventive maintenance, repair and replacement. Although bridge engineers know how to manage bridges so that they stay sound indefi nitely, nearly all states lack the money to do so. As a result, they must carefully balance the conditions of their bridges against the public’s need for safety.

### States have repeatedly not been accountable for using money to make bridges a priority

ALAN GREENBLATT (GOVERNING correspondent) “Fixing Bridges ... Or Not” Governing, June 2011

Remember when fixing bridges seemed like it was going to be a big deal? After the 2007 Interstate-35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis, many states talked about the need to address an infrastructure crisis that included crumbling bridges [Read "Six Ideas for Fixing the Nation's Infrastructure Problems"]. But bridges have never emerged as a real spending priority. Even when states were handed what amounted roughly to an extra year’s worth of transportation dollars through the 2009 federal stimulus package, bridge repair remained rather low on the list. A recent study by the advocacy group Transportation for America found that nearly 70,000 bridges -- or more than 11 percent of the nation’s total -- remain “structurally deficient.” “Two key problems persist,” according to the group’s report. “While Congress has repeatedly declared bridge safety a national priority, existing federal programs don’t ensure that aging bridges actually get fixed; and the current level of investment is nowhere near what is needed to keep up with our rapidly growing backlog of aging bridges.”

## A2 Politics – Plan is bipartisan

### Funding bridges is historically bipartisan.

The Baltimore Sun, February 27, 2012, “The gridlock over transportation spending,” http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-02-27/news/bs-ed-transportation-20120227\_1\_transportation-bill-gas-tax-transit-program

That's because the serious business of building and maintaining roads, bridges, rail systems and other vital transportation assets is usually among the most bipartisan of Congressional actions. Every community requires such spending whether it's rural, a small town or a big city. Decaying bridges are a danger, and without transit, cities would not function.

## A2 Federal government lacks jurisdiction

### Federal bridge funds can be spent on any bridge in the National Bridge inventory; regardless of who owns the bridge.

Lilly Shoup, Nick Donohue and Marisa Lang March 30 2011 The Fix We’re In For: The State of Our Nation’s Bridges TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA the largest, most diverse coalition working on trans¬portation reform today http://t4america.org/docs/bridgereport/bridgereport-national.pdf

Ownership of a particular bridge is significant because it often determines which jurisdiction is responsible for maintenance and repair. It is important to note, however, that federal bridge repair funds can be spent on any bridge in the National Bridge Inventory — all 600,000, no matter who owns the bridge. Table 2 shows the number and average annual daily traffic on our nation’s bridges

# \*\*\*Negative\*\*\*

## Politics links – Plan is controversial

### Republicans opposes investment in infrastructure improvements and bridge repair.

Travis Waldron and Tanya Somanader on Sep 9, 2011 at 3:25 pm REPORT: As Their States’ Bridges And Roads Crumble, GOP Leaders Remain Opposed To Infrastructure Investment

http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2011/09/09/315827/report-as-their-states-bridges-and-roads-crumble-gop-leaders-remain-opposed-to-infrastructure-investment/

Even as roads and bridges in their states fall apart, Republicans remain opposed to Obama’s efforts to invest in improvement projects. When progressives and Democrats pushed for more infrastructure spending in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Republicans demanded a bigger emphasis on tax cuts. When House Democrats passed a jobs bill geared toward infrastructure investment in February 2010, Republicans derailed it in the Senate. And unless the GOP undergoes a radical shift in priorities in the next few months, yet another plan that will help solve both America’s infrastructure and jobs crises will die at the hands of Congressional Republicans.

### Republicans oppose investment in bridges.

Travis Waldron and Tanya Somanader on Sep 9, 2011 at 3:25 pm REPORT: As Their States’ Bridges And Roads Crumble, GOP Leaders Remain Opposed To Infrastructure Investment

http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2011/09/09/315827/report-as-their-states-bridges-and-roads-crumble-gop-leaders-remain-opposed-to-infrastructure-investment/

Republican leadership has continually blocked efforts by Obama and Congressional Democrats to invest in infrastructure improvements, and as a result, bridges and roadways in their states are crumbling. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, about 12 percent of the nation’s bridges are considered “structurally deficient,” the same rating given to the Minneapolis bridge that collapsed in 2007, killing 13 people. Roughly another 12 percent are considered “functionally obsolete.” In four of the five states represented by Republican congressional leadership, the rate of structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges outpaces the national average.

### Plan is controversial – politicians see it as lacking immediate reward.

Ari Bloomekatz, October 20th, 2011, LA TIMES, “L.A. Area home to dozens of deficient bridges, report finds”, http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/20/local/la-me-bad-bridges-20111020

"Politically there's almost no obvious reward for fixing something before it collapses as opposed to building something new," Wachs said. "We constantly turn our backs on the importance of our infrastructure.... Eventually when we face the music, it's going to cost more and it's going to be more difficult and complex," he said.

## Politics links – Plan is controversial

### Plan is controversial – politicians only support big flashy new construction.

Jack Shafer (editor at large) “Infrastructure Madness” Slate, April 21 2009

As Tom G. Palmer wrote in the February 1983 Inquiry magazine (disclosure: I worked there), "it is no accident that while the rhetoric is repair, the reality is new construction." He continues: Highway-improvement politics differs little from military hardware procurement. Rather than keeping old systems in good repair, money flows into flashy new structures where millions can be lavished on consultants, research, and planning. Big construction projects—not well-executed maintenance projects—deliver political rewards, Palmer holds. "Nobody ever held a ribbon cutting-ceremony for the painting of a bridge," he observes this week.

### Plan is controversial – too much money.

ALAN GREENBLATT (GOVERNING correspondent) “Fixing Bridges ... Or Not” Governing, June 2011

 “It’s not a question of whether it’s important, it’s a question of whether there’s money to do much,” says Richard Little, who heads the Keston Institute for Public Finance and Infrastructure Policy at the University of Southern California. “The way the country is right now, if we had bridges falling down every week, I don’t know if we could get both sides to agree on a program.”

### Republicans oppose bridge repair and investment.

PR Newswire, March 21, 2012, PR Newswire, "Emergency Bridge Repair Team" Rolls Through Ohio, Highlighting Unsafe Bridges and Urging House Speaker Boehner to Lead Adoption of Bi-Partisan Senate Highway Bill,” http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/emergency-bridge-repair-team-rolls-through-ohio-highlighting-unsafe-bridges-and-urging-house-speaker-boehner-to-lead-adoption-of-bi-partisan-senate-highway-bill-143645416.html

"If extremist Republicans in Congress have their way, we will need a whole fleet of trucks and a lot more duct tape," said Randy McGuire, Marketing Director for the Ohio Laborers' District Council. "Instead of passing a bipartisan bill that will protect bridges and jobs like the Senate has done, the House continues on the path of partisan politics and is putting public safety at risk."

## States CP solvency

### Bridges state responsibility, not the USFG

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, June 13, 2011, “bridge inspection responsibility of the states” http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/110613.cfm

Yes. It is clear from the language of 23 U.S.C. 151 that a State is ultimately responsible for the inspection of all public highway bridges within the State, except for those that are federally or tribally owned. Subsection (a) of Section 151 directs the Secretary, "in consultation with the State DOTs and interested and knowledgeable private organizations," to establish the bridge inspection standards for "all highway bridges." In Subsection (b) the Congress mandates that the standards shall, at a minimum, "specify, in detail, the method by which such inspections shall be carried out by the States." The FHWA, the Agency charged with implementing Section 151, promulgated rules that require State DOTs "to inspect, or cause to be inspected, all highway bridges located on public roads." See 23 CFR 650.307(a). The State may delegate bridge inspection policies and procedures, quality assurance and quality control, preparation and maintenance of a bridge inventory, bridge inspections, reports, load ratings and other requirements of these standards to smaller units of the State like a city or county. However, such delegation does not relieve the State transportation department of any of its responsibilities under the NBIS. Because of the fundamental relationship established in Title 23 of the U.S. Code between the FHWA and a State, if the inspections by a city or county were not done in accordance with the NBIS, the FHWA could take action against the State for failure to comply with Federal laws and regulations.

### Empirically, states can be effective at dealing with their bridges – Missouri bridge programs prove.

Bill Wilson, May the Fourth 2012, Roads and Bridges, “States of the Bridges: Sounding Confident”, http://www.roadsbridges.com/state-bridges-sounding-confident

Most of Missouri’s lowest-rated bridges are now safe and sound, or will be by the end of the year. Beyond that, the state is locked into a house of uncertainty. Arguably the most effective bridge maintenance efforts in recent memory, the Missouri Department of Transportation’s (MoDOT) $685 million Safe and Sound Bridge Delivery Program is expected to run out of life in September, more than a year ahead of schedule, but not before 804 of the most susceptible crossings were strengthened. According to MoDOT special assignments coordinator Bob Brendel, in just three years Missouri has reduced the number of deficient bridges by more than 400, reversing a negative trend that weighed heavily on the minds of MoDOT personnel for decades.

## Bridges are safe

### Affirmative evidence is flawed – based on inaccurate Transportation for America data. Even bridges deemed “structurally deficient” are safe.

Ari Bloomekatz, October 20th, 2011, LA TIMES, “L.A. Area home to dozens of deficient bridges, report finds”, http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/20/local/la-me-bad-bridges-20111020

"The data Transportation For America used to produce the deficient bridge report is outdated," said Caltrans spokesman Matt Rocco. "Caltrans has already completed repairs to some of the bridges, meaning they are no longer structurally deficient," he said. Though dozens of structurally deficient bridges across the county may seem to only suffer from potholes, graffiti and overgrown brush, the report suggests they have substantive problems with their decks and supports. Doug Failing, executive director of highways for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, said the group's findings are "reason to be concerned, although not reason to be panicked." Structurally deficient bridges are not on the brink of collapse but are in need of repair to extend their life spans, Failing said.

### All there evidence is overhyped—no need to fix bridges now, no danger.

Jack Shafer (editor at large) “Infrastructure Madness” Slate, April 21 2009

The scary-sounding phrases structurally deficient and functionally obsolete combined with those big numbers are enough to make you bite your nails bloody every time you drive over a river or beneath an underpass. Yet if any of the cited pieces paused to define either inspection term, you'd come away from the alarmist stories with a yawn. As a 2006 report by U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration puts it (very large PDF): Structural deficiencies are characterized by deteriorated conditions of significant bridge elements and reduced load carrying capacity. Functional obsolescence is a function of the geometrics of the bridge not meeting current design standards.Neither type of deficiency indicates that the bridge is unsafe. [Emphasis added.] A "structurally deficient" bridge can safely stay in service if weight limitations are posted and observed and the bridge is monitored, inspected, and maintained. A bridge designed in the 1930s could be deemed "functionally obsolete" because it's narrower than modern standards dictate or because its clearance over a highway isn't up to modern snuff, not because it's in danger of tumbling down. (The Department of Transportation's 2004 inventory found 77,796 U.S. bridges structurally deficient and 80,632 functionally obsolete, for a totally of 158,428 deficient bridges.)

### Harms are overblown – “structurally deficient” bridges sound worse than reality. They are safe.

ALAN GREENBLATT (GOVERNING correspondent) “Fixing Bridges ... Or Not” Governing, June 2011

It was never going to be the case that stimulus dollars would be spent primarily on bridges, says Lloyd Brown, a spokesman for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. For one thing, the term “structurally deficient” sounds scarier than the reality. All the term means is that a bridge needs repair -- not that it’s about to fall down. State transportation departments inspect every bridge at least once every other year. They shut down the ones that aren’t safe to drive on, Brown says. Also, bridge projects are generally too complicated to have met the spend-it-fast demands of the stimulus law. “Most of the states put money into things they could move quickly, such as asphalt overlays,” he says. “Bridge projects, especially replacement projects, tend to be a longer-term development.”

## Bridges are safe

### Bridges can withstand the lack of investment – system is highly resilient.

American Society of Civil Engineers 2010, America’s Infrastructure Report Card <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/fact-sheet/bridges>

The reliable and efficient flow of people, commodities, and emergency services within our roadway system relies on the nation’s bridge system, which overall is highly resilient. The keys involve three components: system redundancy and workarounds; recovery measures, including rapid restoration ability, security, and robustness against hazards—both natural and man-made; and individual bridges’ structural redundancy. Interstate bridges are usually built in pairs so that if one is taken out of service, the companion bridge can carry traffic in both directions temporarily. Also, in most urban areas, there are a number of bridges that can provide suitable alternate routes for traffic. Those key bridges that lack redundancy make it extremely difficult to establish convenient workarounds should the bridge be closed. Increasing congestion means that any rerouting caused by a significant bridge closure could result in major traffic delays. Bridges are designed to account for the likely loads and forces that the span could expect to encounter during its service life. Structurally, today’s bridges are highly redundant, and incorporate multiple girder systems that can compensate for the failure of a single member. There are exceptions for example, fracture-critical bridges, which require more frequent monitoring to ensure that they remain capable of handling their designed traffic loads. Resiliency should be part of the evaluation criteria in a risk-analysis to justify and prioritize bridge investment. That investment includes activities that range from nonstructural measures to the structural and from the design of new bridges to the rehabilitation and replacement of old bridges.

### The statistical likelihood of bridge collapse is exceptionally low.

Richard M. Gutkowksi, (professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Colorado State University and past chairman of the American Society of Civil Engineers Administrative Committee on Bridges), August 13, 2007, Colorado State, “Forty years of progress in bridge engineering - but more is needed,” <http://www.today-archive.colostate.edu/index.asp> ?url=display\_story&story\_id=1002457

Catastrophic collapse of a major bridge has occurred about once per decade. For about 600,000 bridges nationwide, that's about a .0002 percent occurrence rate per decade - and 0 percent is a virtual impossibility. No bridge lasts forever or all Roman bridges would still stand. Rehabilitation and replacement are inevitable, and the failure rate underlies that those processes are very well done. Comprehensive biannual inspection/rating done on every bridge - a combination of detailed visual documentation and computation to arrive at an estimated present load capacity - is a factor. Under-capacity bridges are either posted for lower loads or closed based on the calculations and engineering judgment. "Sufficiency Rating" (SR) is not "load capacity", but a scaling system to assess relative eligibility for potential federal bridge funds and input for prioritizing competing projects. Load capacity is only part of that value. SR of 50 to 80 equals possible rehabilitation funding; below 50 equals possible replacement funds. Like a credit rating score, SR involves many factors and is a ballpark indicator. I-35W was at the cusp for funding options - officially being just barely ineligible for federal replacement funds.

## Bridges are safe

### The affirmative is engaging in fear mongering - structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges are both safe to drive on.

Catherine Pritchard, September 25th, 2011, Fayetteville Observer, “Livewire: Structurally deficient bridges deemed safe” http://www.fayobserver.com/articles/2011/09/25/1124876?sac=Col

Not at all, according to state and federal transportation officials. "If NCDOT determined a bridge was not safe to drive on, we would close it immediately," spokeswoman Julia Merchant said in an email. So, if a bridge is open, it's deemed safe to drive on, she said. That doesn't mean it doesn't have issues. Nearly 2,700 of the state's 13,531 bridges are officially designated as "structurally deficient." They include the 153 bridges mentioned by the president that are in the National Highway System. (The system is 160,000 miles of roadway considered important to the nation's economy, defense and mobility.) A bridge is deemed structurally deficient if it's in relatively poor condition or if it has insufficient load-carrying capacity. Typically, such a bridge requires maintenance and repair and eventual rehabilitation or replacement to address deficiencies, according to the Federal Highway Administration. If necessary, its weight limits are reduced to a level where it can maintain its structural integrity. Bridges can also be designated as "functionally obsolete." That means the design no longer meets current standards in such areas as lane width, shoulder width and vertical clearance. More than 2,400 bridges in the state are so designated. Some older bridges carry both designations.

### Bridge collapses are rare and cause minimal damage – plan isn’t worth it.

FREDERIC J. FROMMER and JOAN LOWY, November 14, 2008, Associated Press, “Bridge design flaws may not be as rare as thought,” http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/politics/2008385550\_apbridgecollapsentsb.html

Major bridge collapses are rare. Over the last four decades, the NTSB has investigated 24 bridge collapses, only five of which resulted from something other than a ship or a truck running into the bridge. Design flaws, however, may have occurred more often than thought before the Minneapolis bridge collapse. After the tragedy, safety investigators asked transportation officials in 14 states if they had found instances in which bridges had design flaws. Ten states responded they had found at least one. That's only 10 examples out of about 80,000 bridges built during the time frame state officials were asked about. Not all the flaws found were "safety critical," said Mark Bagnard, chief investigator for the safety board. "Thankfully, it's not all that common."

### Bridge failures are extremely rare and don’t cause death.

AASHTO, American Association of State Highway 2010 “Bridging the gap” http://www.transportation1.org/bridgereport/facing-facts.html

As a result, bridge failures are extremely rare. Of the few bridge collapses in recent decades, the large majority are attributed to external events such as ship collisions or major fi res, or natural disasters such as earthquakes or hurricanes. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, in the past 20 years approximately 47 deaths have been attributable to bridge failures.

## Bridges are safe

### Structurally deficient does not mean dangerous

Rantberg, 2007-08-05, Rantberg, “http://www.rantburg.com/poparticle.php?D=2007-08-05&ID=195362

"Structurally Deficient" is not anywhere near "dangerous". The thousands of structurally deficient bridges are not dangerous, either. It might just mean, "We don't build 'em that way anymore." The first thing that happens is the bridges get "posted" with a load limit, like many rural roads. When a 100-year old bridge that is posted at 20,000 pounds (max) gets a lost truck weighing 80,000 lbs, sometimes the driver makes it. Often he does not. Maybe somebody missed something on an inspection, or perhaps it was some unusual loads from the repair work. Usually, failures like this are a result of several small issues that were not harmful. The Titanic could've survived the iceberg hit, if the bulkheads went all the way to the top, or the Captain had not been running so fast, or the steel was not so brittle, or the rivets were not so bad, and there were lifeboats for everybody. But other than that, it was the iceberg.

### Sufficiency rates of bridges are improving and have become safer in the last 10 years

Phillip R. Herr, Director Physical Infrastructure Issues Testimony 2010

Before the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10930t.pdf HIGHWAY BRIDGE PROGRAM

Condition of Nation’s Bridges Shows Limited Improvement, but Further Actions Could Enhance the Impact of Federal Investment

Additionally, in our prior work, we found that the average sufficiency rating of all bridges—including both deficient and not deficient bridges—also improved slightly. Specifically, the average sufficiency rating for all bridges increased from 75 to 79 on the sufficiency rating’s 100-point scale from 1998 to 2007. Further, while structurally deficient bridges generally have lower sufficiency ratings (average rating of 42 in 2007) than functionally obsolete bridges (average rating of 69 in 2007), the average sufficiency ratings of both types of deficient bridges improves slightly since 1998. In updating our prior work, FHWA officials indicated that bridge sufficiency ratings have continued to improve (average rating of 80 in 2009).

## Bridges are safe

### Bridge conditions are improving and the structural deficiency of many areas of bridges has decreased over the past few years.

Phillip R. Herr, Director Physical Infrastructure Issues Testimony 2010

Before the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10930t.pdf HIGHWAY BRIDGE PROGRAM

Condition of Nation’s Bridges Shows Limited Improvement, but Further Actions Could Enhance the Impact of Federal Investment

Evaluating the impact of the HBP is important not only to understand the outcomes of past spending, but also to determine how to sensibly in future federal resources. The number of bridges in need of repair or rehabilitation is expected to increase as a large share of the nations bridges built in the 1960s and early 1970s age. In our prior work, we reported that the average age of bridges in 2007 in the NBI was a pproximately 35 years, the average age of bridges with a sufficiency rating of 80 or less was 39 years (a deficient bridge with this rating becomes eligible for rehabilitation), and the average age of bridges with a sufficiency rating less than 50 was 53 years (a deficient bridge with this rating becomes eligible for replacement). This suggests that as the age of the bridges in this group rises, so will the number of HBP eligible bridges. As a result result, states and local agencies may see a spike in their need for bridge rehabilitation and replacement funding over the next 15 years. In our work to update this report, FHWA officials indicated that bridge conditions are continuing to improve despite the aging of bridges and noted that factors in addition to age—such as the original type of design, maintenance, and climate—contribute to bridge conditions. Also, the reduction in deficient deck area is an important measure of the overall condition of the nation’s bridges. According to FHWA data, the structurally deficient deck area of bridges on all highway systems has decreased by about 11 percent between 1998 and 2009. Nevertheless, FHWA officials indicated that they expect these trends in bridge conditions to continue as long as historical investment trends are sustained. In this environment of increasing demand for limited resources, it is especially important for FHWA and Congress to be able to evaluate HBPs impact to ensure that the program is providing an acceptable return on investment and addressing national transportation needs.

### Bridges are safe and in good repair.

Bruce Sieceloff, September 20th, 2011, “Worry not, triangle’s bridges are safe” http://www.newsobserver.com/2011/09/20/1503040/worry-not-triangles-bridges-are.html

"The key thing is: We don't have any bridges that are about to fall," said Wally Bowman, DOT's division chief for Wake and six neighboring counties. "We don't have any bridge out there that is structurally inadequate, where it cannot handle the traffic. We make sure those bridges stay in a good state of repair." Obama appears to have undercounted his bridges. And at the same time - employing the deft spin that political speakers use when they spice up a little information to make a big impression - the president may have over-suggested the risk to public safety.

## Bridges are safe

### Structurally deficient bridges are safe.

Grant M. Dahl, September 19, 2011, CNS news, “N.C.: ‘We Are Not Sure’ Why Obama Got Facts Wrong on Bridges” http://cnsnews.com/news/article/nc-we-are-not-sure-why-obama-got-facts-wrong-bridges

CNSNews.com) - The North Carolina Department of Transportation say it is “not sure” how President Barack Obama came up with the statistic that there are 153 “structurally deficient bridges” in that state--in arguing for more federal stimulus spending before “another bridge falls.” In fact, according to the department, there are far more than 153 “structurally deficient” bridges in North Carolina—but the designation “structurally deficient” does not mean they are in any way unsafe.

###  “Structurally deficient” is an engineering term not a safety term.

RAD BAUER , April 10, 2011, Marietta Times, “About 30 bridges deemed deficient,” http://www.newsandsentinel.com/page/content.detail/id/546681/About-30-bridges-deemed-deficient.html?nav=5061

The bridge is one of about 30 in the area deemed "structurally deficient" in a national bridge safety study released this month. County and state highway officials say the term " deficient" can be misleading and contend the bridges in the area are safe. "We're talking about an engineering term and not a safety term," said David Rose, spokesman for the Ohio Department of Transportation District 10 in Marietta. "Safety is our top priority. We inspect bridges annually and if we felt a bridge needed significant repairs, we would limit loads, if necessary, or close the bridge if that was necessary."

### Structurally deficient doesn’t mean the bridges will collapse or is dangerous.

Frank James, August 2 2007, The Swamp, “Many 'structurally deficient' bridges in the U.S.” http://www.swamppolitics.com/news/politics/blog/2007/08/many\_structurally\_deficient\_br.html

Clearly, even structurally deficient bridges aren't collapse prone or else we'd be seeing a lot more tragedies like that experienced by Minneapolis. There's a fair amount of engineering that evidently still keeps them standing.

### Structurally deficient bridges are safe

National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, No Date, “Did You Know” http://transportationfortomorrow.com/global/did\_you\_know.htm

Twenty-nine percent of the nations 585,500 bridges are deemed structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Structurally deficient bridges are safe, but often restricted to light vehicle traffic only. Functionally obsolete bridges have older design standards that prevent them from accommodating current traffic volumes and modern vehicle sizes and weights.