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## NACo Survey Finds Counties Have Significant Highway & Bridge Funding Needs

Roads and bridges under county control are urgently in need of federal assistance for maintenance and repair work, according to a survey of 1,300 county engineers that was recently released by the National Association of Counties. At its annual conference in Washington this week, NACo urged Congress to finish work on a surface transportation reauthorization bill.

"The nation's county roads and bridges need work, and the American people need jobs," NACo President Lenny Eliason, commissioner in Athens County, Ohio, said in a statement. "Maintaining safe and reliable transportation infrastructure across America is a basic yet vital function of government. It's long overdue for Washington to reach agreement on a multiyear surface transportation bill."

Engineers in 31 states -- all members of NACo's affiliate organization, the National Association of County Engineers -- responded to the survey conducted by National Research LLC.

A major finding is that 81% of respondents said they have deferred maintenance of surface transportation infrastructure since the start of the economic slowdown.

During that same timeframe, 79% of those surveyed said that they experienced cutbacks in local funding. In addition, 75% suffered cutbacks in state funding while 61% faced reductions in federal appropriations. A slight majority of respondents said their infrastructure budgets declined as a result of those cutbacks by anywhere from 10% to 25% since 2008.

Of those surveyed, 98% reported that at least some of their county roads were in only poor or fair condition and 86% said that they have bridges in poor condition.

"Americans count on their county governments to build and maintain the arteries that keep people and goods moving safely and effectively," U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, who spoke to NACo Tuesday, [wrote on his blog](#). "And county governments look to state and federal support to help them do that important job. But, when the nation lacks a long-term transportation plan, our counties can't rely on that support."

Respondents were asked to estimate how much more money it would take to get county roads in good condition; 25% said \$10 to \$25 million would be needed, 10% indicated it would take \$25 to \$50 million, and another 11% said that a higher amount would be required.

Those county engineers answering the survey were also asked if they thought that possible funding from the enactment by Congress of a multiyear federal surface transportation reauthorization would help them improve the condition of roads and bridges in their counties; 90% responded in the affirmative. Current law authorizing federal highway and transit programs expires March 31. (See related stories regarding developments this week on reauthorization bills in the [House](#) and [Senate](#))

A 21-page report summarizing NACo's survey results is available at [bit.ly/NACo-Survey](http://bit.ly/NACo-Survey).

Questions regarding this article may be directed to [editor@ashtojournal.org](mailto:editor@ashtojournal.org).