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Without that funding, the state would have to halt 108 highway improvement projects worth an estimated \$1.4 billion.

The Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation would lose all of its \$15 million in funding, and the Rail Division would have to delay dozens of safety projects, said DOT spokesman Mike Charbonneau.

But that's exactly what could happen as gridlock in Washington threatens road projects in the states.

"If the federal government does not invest in our transportation system, we estimate the state will lose more than 20,000 jobs, and vital transportation needs will go undelivered," Charbonneau said in an email. "It is crucial that Congress develop a long-term solution to prevent continued uncertainty for people who depend on our transportation infrastructure – our citizens."

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), the current federal surface transportation funding bill, is set to expire Sept. 30. Road projects in North Carolina could come to a screeching halt if it's not extended before then, Gov. Pat McCrory said at a recent meeting. McCrory said he's "concerned" and has a meeting scheduled with state lawmakers later this month.

He's also co-chairing a federal coalition on the topic.

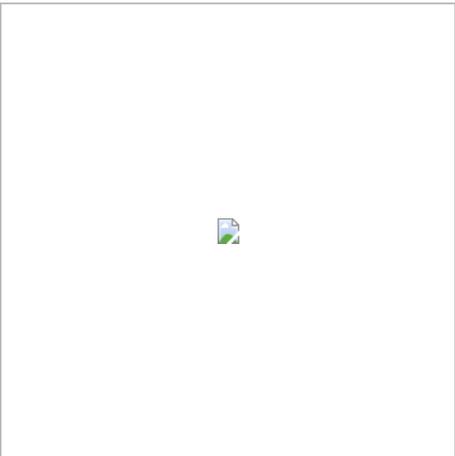
"It's going to have tremendous impact on North Carolina's ability to build roads," the governor said.

Congress passed MAP-21 two years ago and allocated two years' worth of funding to the system, along with setting forth a number of transportation reforms.

[Gridlock in Washington threatens road projects](#) By Molly Parker



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StarNewsOnline.com May 3, 2014 1:40 AM

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Transportation Officials, said the federal Highway Trust Fund, which is funded primarily by the motor fuel taxes, may run out of money by July or August without congressional action.

The problem is related to a number of different factors. First, the federal tax on motor fuels has not been increased since 1993. This coupled with greater use of fuel efficient vehicles and increased costs have allowed revenues going into the Highway Trust Fund to fall behind year-after-year.

"Here we are just two years after the passage of MAP-21 and Congress is faced with another predicament which puts the future of the nation's transit and highway programs at risk," Dorsey said.

Another factor, he said, has been the skyrocketing cost of construction materials.

"What has happened is the cost of everything has gone up," Dorsey said.

The association's Bridging the Gap report found that between 2003 and 2008 asphalt prices soared 70 percent, steel products climbed 105 percent, and concrete jumped 36 percent.

"So today, you have all of these soaring costs, a flat-line amount of federal funding going into the Highway Trust Fund and because the fund is not indexed for inflation – you have a recipe for insolvency," Dorsey said.

Michael Lee, a N.C. Board of Transportation member from Wilmington, said state officials have briefed board members on the topic of MAP-21 and the Highway Trust Fund crisis for at least the last four months.

He said if there's not movement in Congress in the coming weeks, DOT will have to make a determination about how to move forward. Already, Delaware has extended a line of credit to keep projects going in case of an impasse, and Rhode Island and Arkansas are slowing construction projects.

"It's a significant issue," Lee said.

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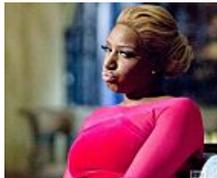
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