



Poll: Majority concerned about condition of US roads



By Keith Laing - 06/12/14 05:03 PM EDT

A majority of United States residents are concerned of the condition of the nation's roads and bridges, according to a new poll that was released on Thursday.

The poll, which was conducted by the Hart Research Associates polling firm, found 59 percent of U.S. residents were worried about "unsafe road conditions due to poor road surfaces."

The poll was conducted on behalf of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), which is pushing Congress to approve a new round of federal transportation funding this summer.

LIUNA General President Terry O'Sullivan said the findings should spur Congress to quickly approve a new transportation bill.

"It's time to stop sugar-coating this issue," O'Sullivan said in a statement. "Americans have real concerns about safety due to the neglect of our roads and bridges. It is the solemn responsibility of Congress to pass a long-term, full-investment Highway Bill this year."

The current transportation funding measure is scheduled to expire at the end of September.

Lawmakers are trying to find a way to close a funding **shortfall** that is estimated to be as high as \$15 billion before the Department of Transportation runs out of money for its Highway Trust Fund, which budget analysts have said could happen in August without congressional action.

The traditional source for transportation funding is revenue that is collected by the federal gas tax, which has been stagnant since 1993 and was not indexed to inflation. The tax only brings in about \$34 billion per year, however, and the current level of transportation spending infrastructure advocates want lawmakers to maintain is about \$50 billion annually.

LIUNA and other transportation advocates have pushed Congress to **increase** the gas tax for the first time in two decades to close the gap, but lawmakers have been reluctant to raise taxes in the middle of an election year.

The union said Thursday that its polling showed 69 percent of U.S. residents said "poor road conditions contribute to wear and tear on their car." Additionally, 28 percent said "road conditions have contributed to an accident involving themselves or someone they know."

O'Sullivan said the figures should compel Congress to solve its transportation funding quandary.

"Congress has no excuse not to act," O'Sullivan said. "For LIUNA, passing a long-term, full-investment Highway Bill is about creating jobs — but it's as much about making our roads and bridges safe. Like most working people, we rely on them every day."

TAGS: Laborers' International Union of North America, Highway Trust Fund, Transportation Funding shortfall, Gas Tax, MAP-21 Reauthorization

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