



Canaries in the Coal Mine: Why the I-35W and the I-5 Bridge Collapses Are Prime Examples of What Happens When Infrastructure Goes Unfunded

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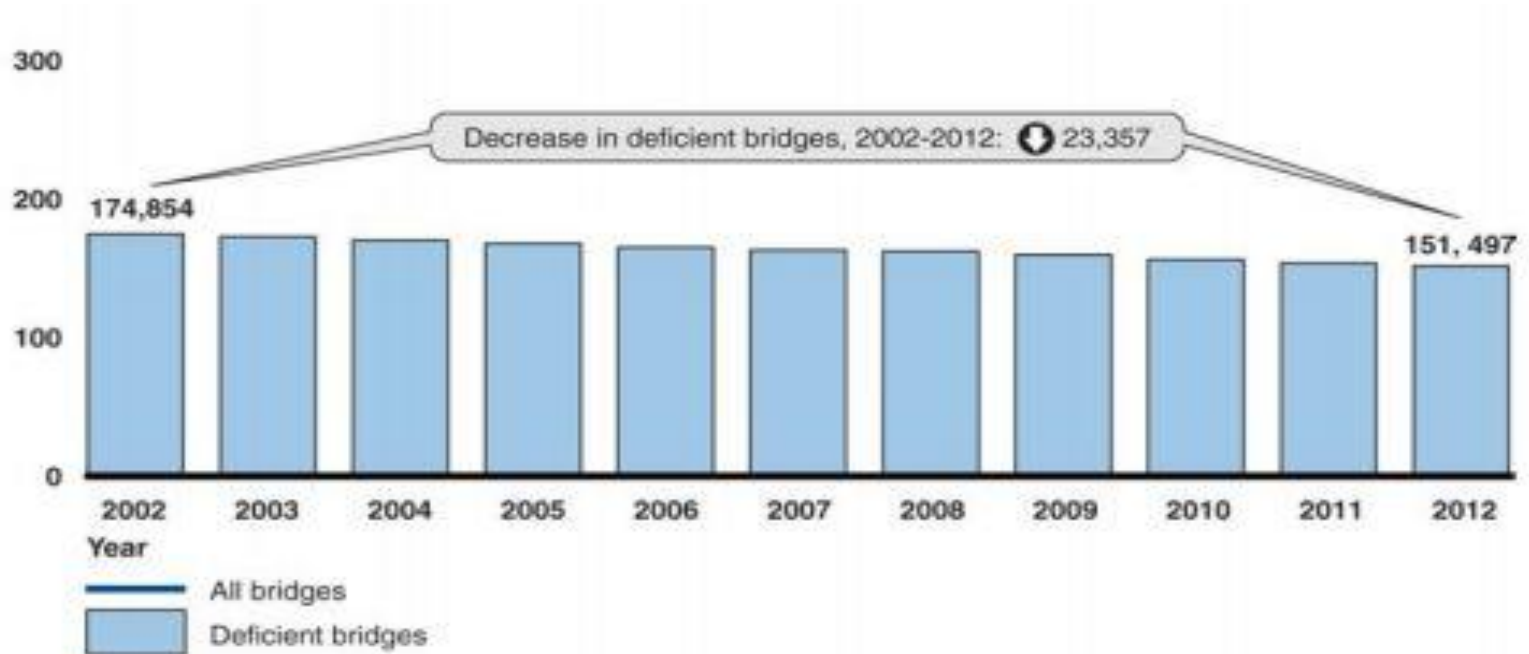


Since 2008 through 2014 Congress has transferred from general funds nearly \$54 billion to keep the Federal Highway Trust Fund afloat.

We continue to build new roads that our politicians use as candy for contributing campaign funders to the tune of nearly 150,000 new miles of road over the past 25 years.



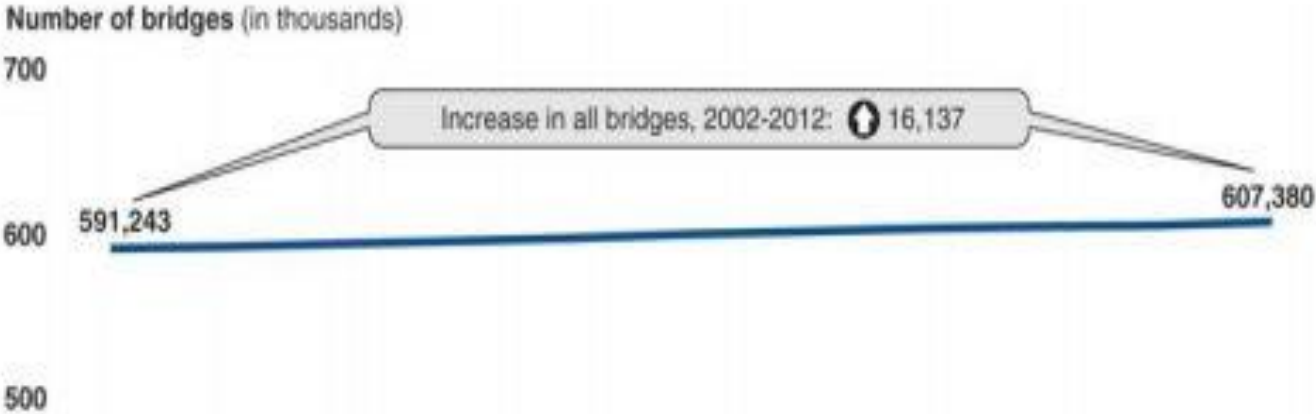
Some advocates for a do nothing approach point to the fact that the total number of all structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges has fallen over the past ten years by 23,000 (from 174,854 in 2002 to 151,497 in 2012).



Source: GAO analysis of FHWA data.

Note: Deficient bridges include both structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges.

But there was an increase in the construction of new bridges that added over 16,000 to our National Bridge Inventory of 607,380 with the net result that the net improvement in unsafe bridges over the past decade has been 1%.



Based on data obtained from the unpublished files of the Federal Highway Administration there were nearly **8,000 bridges** that are **both structurally deficient and fracture critical.**

These bridges included the I-35W that collapsed in Minneapolis on August 1, 2007 and the recent collapse of the I-5 in Washington across the Skagit River.



I-35 W in Minneapolis



I-5 in Washington across the Skagit River

WEBSITE: www.SaveOurBridges.com

or utilize the iPhone App available at iTunes App Store

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On August 1, 2007, the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis collapsed during rush hour, killing 13 people and injuring 145. The bridge had been designated as [structurally deficient](#), due to insufficient maintenance, and [fracture critical](#), because the failure of a single component could result in the failure of the entire structure. These designations are not unique. There are 7,980 other bridges in the U.S. that have been designated structurally deficient and fracture critical. These bridges are still in use in communities across the U.S. today and pose a danger to the public unless they are soon remediated.

Since the I-35W Bridge's collapse, other dangerous bridges have been identified and closed. As recently as September 8, 2011, inspectors closed the [I-64 Sherman Minton Bridge](#) carrying six lanes of traffic across the Ohio River between Louisville, Kentucky, and New Albany, Indiana. This bridge, like the I-35W Bridge, was designed as fracture critical and was rated by inspectors as structurally deficient. It could have collapsed had serious cracks in the bridge not been discovered. While the Sherman Minton Bridge was closed in time, similarly designed bridges remain open.

If there is a dangerous bridge in your area, you need to know about it.

Our companion iPhone app lets you look at dangerous bridges while on the go!



By 2020...

lack of investment in our port infrastructure
will account for **\$270 billion in export losses.**



Air traffic delays are costing our economy \$33 billion a year.



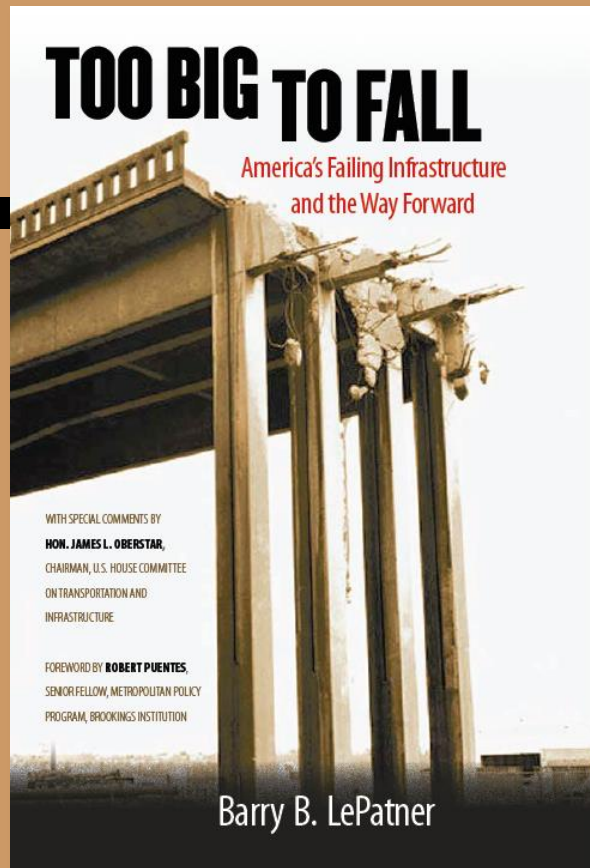
The U.S. spent...

- **\$69 billion** rebuilding the roads and bridges of Iraq
- **\$89 billion** doing the same for Afghanistan

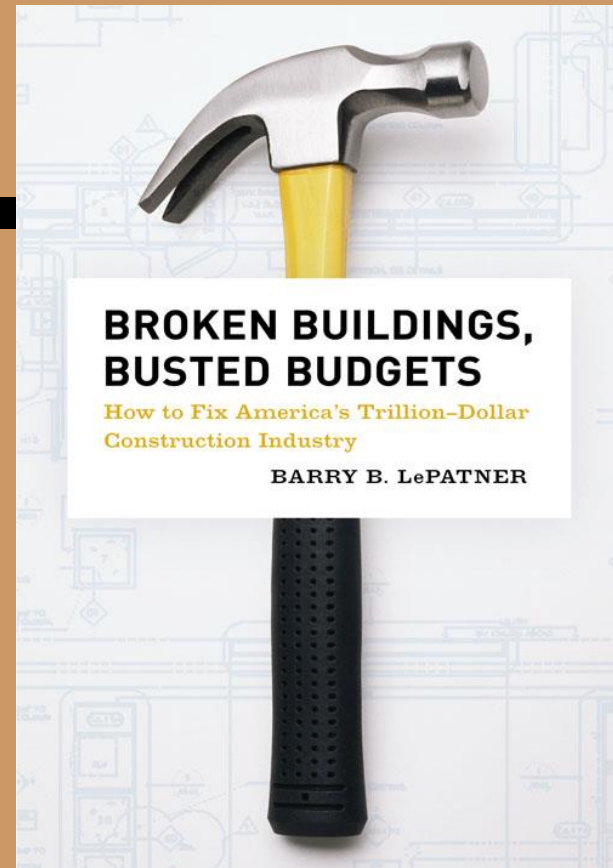
Congress has only committed **\$53 billion** to do the same in our own nation.

THE ECONOMICS OF FIXING OUR NATION'S FAILING BRIDGES

- Replace visual inspection of bridges with the latest technology.
- Secure fixed price contracts for remediation of all transportation projects.
- Revise the outdated ratings formula to ensure targeted funding.
- Institute a national infrastructure bank to seed funding with outside investors.
- Identify ways to secure voter approvals for transportation funding.



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