



## **America's Infrastructure Crisis, A Report from Maryland's Sixth District**

Office of Congressman John K. Delaney

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### **America's Infrastructure Crisis**

America's infrastructure is aging rapidly and is increasingly inadequate. After decades as a global leader, the United States now ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the world in infrastructure and behind key economic competitors in Europe and Asia.<sup>1</sup> As a percentage of GDP, the United States now invests less in infrastructure than at any point in the last 20 years. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, over 600,000 bridges and over 4,000 dams are structurally deficient, while the nation's congested roadways cost the economy over \$100 billion due to wasted fuel costs and lost productivity.<sup>2</sup> In the last five months, seven trains have derailed in the United States, including two Amtrak passenger trains, leading to at least eight deaths.

In addition to not meeting new needs, Congress has failed to update existing infrastructure funding sources. The Highway Trust Fund (HTF), the primary tool for federal transportation projects, faces an annual budget shortfall of over \$10 billion. At the end of May the HTF will face insolvency, endangering projects nationwide. The U.S. Department of Transportation has notified the states that federal transportation payments will cease absent Congressional action.

To address the nation's infrastructure deficit, Congressman John K. Delaney (MD-6) has filed bipartisan legislation to rebuild America's infrastructure and create over a million new jobs. [The bipartisan Infrastructure 2.0 Act](#) provides six years of solvency to the Highway Trust Fund and creates a new American Infrastructure Fund to finance \$750 billion in local projects by using revenues from international corporate tax reform.

### **Infrastructure Stories from Maryland**

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<sup>1</sup> See [The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-15](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [The American Society of Civil Engineers' Report Card for America's Infrastructure, 2013](#).

In March, Congressman Delaney asked constituents to share their stories on how America's aging infrastructure is impacting their lives. To date, over 400 local residents have submitted stories, totaling over 150 pages of concerns. Responses came from students, working parents and seniors, from Marylanders who drive to work and those who use transit, including constituents from all five counties in Maryland's Sixth Congressional District. Delaney also hosted infrastructure roundtables in Hagerstown and Frederick, meeting with constituents and business leaders.

Overwhelmingly, Marylanders expressed concern that local and national infrastructure has become inadequate, hurting their quality of life as well as their economic and educational opportunities.

#### Top Infrastructure Concerns from Marylanders:

- Long commutes harming quality of life, limiting job and educational opportunities.
- Inadequate regional infrastructure limiting economic growth and business opportunities.
- Safety concerns on highways, especially I-81, on local roads, bridges, rail and Metro.
- Economic costs caused by wasted fuel, vehicle damage created by poor roads.
- Limited public transit options, especially for disabled Marylanders.

### **Marylanders Give Nation's Infrastructure D+ Grade**

Congressman Delaney also asked constituents to grade America's infrastructure and Congress's response. Over 650 Marylanders responded via email and social media, giving America's infrastructure an overall grade of D+ as well. Over 58% of respondents gave America's infrastructure a D or F grade.

Highways and transit both received a D+. Marylanders graded Congress's response to the nation's infrastructure crisis with an F. Over 88% of respondents gave Congress's handling of infrastructure policy a D or F grade.

### **Individual Infrastructure Stories from Marylanders:**

#### **Kenneth from Poolesville**

“As a disabled veteran that uses a wheelchair due to a spinal cord injury, hitting potholes results in severe pain. Additionally, poorly maintained sidewalks and ramps result in abrupt stops or

getting dumped out of my chair onto the pavement. WMATA's inability to properly coordinate emergency rescue operations makes the METRO a very poor option for disabled people, in the event of a major incident I expect that WMATA would just leave me to die. Traffic congestion yields extremely long commutes that impact my ability to function due to increased pain. All of these issues impact my ability to find sustainable employment opportunities.”

**Magnus from Hagerstown**

“Death Valley” is what we call I-81 in Washington County. It seems like we hear about a fatal accident just about every week on this stretch of road.”

**Michael from Ijamsville**

“Frequent delays on Amtrak trips to NYC because of poor track conditions.”

**Kent from Clear Spring**

“Living in Washington County, the lack of infrastructure improvements is evident every time someone drives on Interstate 81. As a member of a volunteer fire company, I am well aware of how dangerous this road has become to drive on. Fatalities occur regularly, as the amount of traffic has exceeded all capabilities of the road.”

**Wendi from Gaithersburg**

“As a person with a vision impairment who works, dependable and affordable public transportation is a must-have. Buses and trains that operate - even on weekends and holidays - are a necessity for those of us who, due to disability, financial limitations or as a matter of conscience, do not own or operate private vehicles.”

**Chuck from Urbana**

“One of the reasons I retired from my federal job before reaching eligibility for a higher annuity was the length of my commute.”

**Matthew from Frederick**

“I waste at least ten hours per week sitting in traffic on Interstate 270 and the Capital Beltway during my commute. This is time I could be spending with my family or in any other range of activities to better myself and my community, all of which would be a better use of time than sitting in traffic wasting fuel.”

**Suzannah from Adamstown**

“Perhaps this is not the sort of infrastructure story that you are seeking, but for me personally the state of the Broadband infrastructure (or lack thereof) is troubling. As a community college professor, I am required to teach online, and am encouraged to use a variety of multimedia methods in my courses. I typically work seven days a week and work from home during the summers. Unfortunately, broadband internet is not available at my home. We have only very slow DSL at our disposal. As a result, I do not use much multimedia in my courses. Not only am I frustrated, but my students lose out. Broadband access must be expanded if we want to remain nationally and globally competitive.”

**Pamela from Hagerstown**

“Most of the bridges in Frederick & Wash. Co. need repair. It seems like the bridges are sinking as the car jerks when it enters onto the bridge span; the car jerks and shakes.”

**Ronald from Big Pool**

“Our highways and bridges have deteriorated to a point where motorcycle riding is becoming even more dangerous than usual. I am a member of The Patriot Guard Riders, we provide funeral escort for Veterans, Police and First Responders and as such, we ride in all types of weather. Our roads and bridges present a hazard to any vehicle, much more so to two wheeled vehicles. In earlier times cyclists had to be alert for tire casings, wood blocks and trash off trucks but now potholes, open cracks, bridge seams and crumbling blacktop combine to increase the riding hazard considerably. A four wheeled vehicle is inconvenienced by such hazards while a motorcycle is threatened. [...] Riding a cycle at night has become deadly foolish.”

**Stefan from Boyds**

“There have been multiple issues, from rust in the water to flooding on my street from broken mains- but I'll just give you one example- I have to take MD 340 to get to work. I was on that road last winter (2014) and went over the bridge that is above Cacocin Creek- there was a chunk of road missing that not only blew out my front passenger side tire, and chipped the wheel, but also broke my axle. All told, over a thousand dollars in repairs.”

**Theresa from Cumberland**

“A woman in her late 50s, after a difficult divorce from an abusive husband, tries to earn a community college certificate/degree so she can be independent, but she must walk 10-12 miles to catch a bus to get to the local community college. The transit service does not come any closer to her home, and the special van service and any assistance with transportation through mobility and transportation groups are limited to medical appointments. She must walk 10-12 miles to get groceries, an education to achieve independence, etc.”

**Christopher from Frederick**

“Commuting to and from Frederick is a nightmare and a reason I am considering leaving the area to find work in another state.”

**Maija from Frederick**

“Poor infrastructure in Maryland has directly impacted my life by decreasing the time I can spend with family and increasing my commute time. My brother and his family are actually moving from Maryland to Colorado in a few months in order to improve their quality of life.”

**Nancy from Cresaptown**

“Our infrastructure is so bad in Cresaptown that it added to the problem of flooding that occurred on June 12, 2014. Most of our drainage, which includes storm-drain piping and maintenance that has been neglected for 40 years or more. This neglect is causing our infrastructure and properties to deteriorate more with each passing year.”

**David from Potomac**

“I retired because my 20-minute (without traffic) drive from my Reston office to home in Potomac was often taking two hours. I couldn't stand being tied up in traffic for all that time. So I make less money and there's an experienced worker out of the work force.”

**James from Williamsport**

“As we've discussed the impact on the business I operate daily servicing this great nation and its supply chain is significantly impacted by the current highway conditions. I appreciate your efforts to advance the funding necessary to improve the free flow of commerce.”

**Ann from Montgomery Village**

“Traffic coupled with inadequate mass transit solutions narrows my options for job opportunities. The all-day heavy traffic disrupts intra-agency/inter-corporation business meetings. My daughter would like me to babysit my granddaughter on Friday nights as the most helpful time for her but I can't get to Frederick in a reasonable time at rush hour to get there early enough to be helpful (it take at least 3x longer than on weekends).”

**Joan from Potomac**

“Updating and ensuring a safe subway system is critical to our area and my family. My husband rides Metro every day and I feel worried about his safety. Metro is unreliable and there is no excuse for the unsafe practices resulting in a woman's death. The bridges are in disrepair this again causes me to feel unsafe traveling throughout Maryland and the northeast corridor.”

**Roel from Gaithersburg**

“There are so many infrastructure deficiencies that it is difficult to pick one. eg: uneven sidewalks, gullies on sides of roads, potholes, none maintained lantern poles, rusty railroad overpasses, 2.5 minute waits at traffic lights, poor drainage systems that cause large puddles after rain, above ground power lines, no safe dedicated bicycle paths, archaic public transportation system. etc.”

**Joseph from Boonsboro**

“I-81 through Washington County is a death trap as is I-70.”

**Donald from Williamsport**

“I have traveled I-81 and I-70 and found that both highways have become death traps because of the traffic that both roads now have to handle. Both highways have not been maintained to handle the highway traffic growth that has happen since they were built.”

**Darryl from Gaithersburg**

“Traffic jams leading to and from D.C. had my wife in her car for so many hours that she developed a spinal disorder. Just this month, a gaping pothole in Montgomery County busted not only her tire, but the wheel, costing us nearly all of our tax refund.”

**Leonard from Smithsburg**

“I wish we had Amtrak or Marc Train service. Roads too crowded about 90% of the time.”

**Joseph from Frederick**

“Congressman, every day I commute over bridges riddled with cracks and potholes that I pray for my safety and the safety of others.”

**Kara from Cumberland**

“Cumberland, MD has several serious infrastructure issues. Trains often cut off pedestrian and bicycle access from one side of town to another. Although there is a pedestrian underpass, it is not kept clean, nor is it handicapped or bicycle accessible and the city has been moving to close it without offering a viable alternative. Moreover, the town has several bridges over railways and railway bridges and tunnels that are not well maintained. Residents traveling to and from Industrial Blvd going beneath the railroad often sit with baited breath and a prayer as they wait in the tunnel for the light to change.”

**Barbara from Rockville**

“I very much support infrastructure improvement and replacement and have long worried about what has happened to our highway system, bridges and the like much of which was built in my childhood under the Eisenhower administration. We can't keep ignoring these problems.”

**Sharon from Montgomery Village**

“Metro's Red Line from Shady Grove is at capacity during rush hour. You now need to stand up most of the way down to DC. Meanwhile, 270 is a parking lot. We desperately need to extend the Red Line to Germantown, Urbana and Frederick.”

**Daniel from Potomac**

“My wife stopped using the Redline because it so unreliable and the service after 7PM is very slow.”

**Joseph from Boonsboro**

“I-81 through Washington County is a death trap as is I-70.”

**Linda from Maugansville**

“It's the queasy feeling you get every time you pass beneath Interstate 81 on Maugansville Road and look at the crumbling concrete piers that hold up the highway above.”

**Edward from Oakland**

“I don't want to be crossing a bridge when it fails because of poor maintenance.”

**Dustin from Clarksburg**

“I have days where it takes me 2+ hours to get from Clarksburg MD to Rockville MD, which is about a 25 mile drive. Something desperately needs to be done about Maryland's roadways; it wastes time, leads to angry and stressed commuters, and has developed a pattern of people with unhealthy lifestyles and sleep deprivation.”

**Nathan from Rockville**

“I am a 16 year old high school student who must drive himself to school because I live outside the bus district. Every day I hit a trash can lid sized pothole while getting in a turn lane to get home. I hit it every day and the car is showing the abuse now. Please, make Congress do something productive.”

**Jonathan from Frederick**

“When my wife lost her job here, the only comparable paying jobs she could find were in D.C. However, because the Marc train schedule is almost non-existent, and driving the 270 corridor back and forth every day would leave her no home life whatsoever, working in D.C. is not an option. We can't afford to move to Montgomery County, where she could take the Metro, so that's not an option. The only viable option we found was to sell our house and move out of state, which is what we're doing. I'd call that an infrastructure problem.”

**Leonard from Smithsburg**

“I wish we had Amtrak or Marc Train service. Roads too crowded about 90% of the time.”

**Robert from Clarksburg**

“Our interstates are crumbling our bridges are wearing out. It is hard not to believe that our country is wearing out. All this is happening and NOTHING is done. It is sad but I am older and won't see the full collapse.”

**Julie from Montgomery Village**

“I live in Montgomery Village, and work in Washington, DC. I drive for 15 minutes to Shady Grove Station and on a good day spend 35-40 minutes on the Metro (\$5.65 each way, more if I park instead of getting dropped off). All too often Metro is delayed, and my door-to-door trip can last 90 minutes or more. Door malfunctions, mechanical problems, track problems, and more delay my trip. Metro is working on repairing decades worth of neglect, but improvements aren't coming fast enough.”

**Christopher from Gaithersburg**

“I'm constantly dodging potholes to avoid painful impact to my spine. I've had a minimum of four wheel alignments and have replaced three wheels and two tires due to poor road conditions.”

**Beth from Frederick**

“I live in Southern Frederick County. My former 20 minute commute can take up to 90+ minutes just to get to Germantown. When my work location moved further South on I-270, I felt I had to quit the job. The commute (and my health) was just not sustainable doing that.”

### **Dylan from Frederick**

“270 traffic is killing Frederick County.”

### **John from Germantown**

“Traffic starts getting bad on I-270 at around 5:45am. The persistent traffic problems push everyone to start their day earlier, which exacerbates the problem. As a result of the incredible, daily traffic snarls on I-270, I typically have to leave the house at 5:30 AM. This allows me to leave work at around 2:30 or 3 PM, which gets me home as rush hour is starting. If I were to leave at a more reasonable time in the morning -- say, 7am -- I would probably spend an extra 30 minutes a day in traffic on I-270 going to work. But I then wouldn't be able to leave work until well within rush hour, and my commute home would take at least an hour and a half. This constraint has caused my family considerable stress. The fact that I need to work 6:30 AM to 3 PM just to avoid spending 3 or more hours in the car every day restricts my job opportunities. If nothing is done to remedy traffic in this area, my wife and I will have to consider moving out of state.”

### **Bill from Hagerstown**

“Intersection of I-81 and I-70, all of the bridges in that area are in terrible condition with broken concrete and holes that shake your automobile every time you use that section of the highway. This includes ALL bridges to the east, west north, and south. With the amount of traffic that uses that area daily it is not only dangerous but a disgrace to the Hagerstown area that is seen by tourists and travelers as they visit or just pass through.”

### **Beth from Frederick**

“Public transportation connecting Frederick County to Montgomery, P.G., and D.C. is insufficient. I am a freelance dancer who works odd hours in many different corners of our state as well as the District of Columbia. Without consistent MARC service on the Brunswick line, it is impossible for me to get to work without a vehicle. I have had to decline job opportunities

because I know without reliable transit, and with the kind of rush hours we experience on the road, I won't be able to get from one workplace to another in a timely fashion.”

**Brenda from Frostburg**

“The once heavy traffic has now become congested traffic and it's taking twice as long to get anywhere. Not only am I losing time, I'm spending more money on gas to sit in traffic.”

**Matt from Brunswick**

“There have been multiple issues, from rust in the water to flooding on my street from broken mains- but I'll just give you one example- I have to take MD 340 to get to work. I was on that road last winter (2014) and went over the bridge that is above Cacocin Creek- there was a chunk of road missing that not only blew out my front passenger side tire, and chipped the wheel, but also broke my axle. All told, over a thousand dollars in repairs.”

**Donna from Gaithersburg**

“The residential road we live off of is crumbling.”

**Prabhu from Clarksburg**

“I believe the nation has fallen behind in adding new and improved infrastructure and upgrading and keeping up with existing crumbling infra. It is about time something is done to help every citizen of this country to have a peaceful and stress free driving experience on our roads.”

**Michael from Hagerstown**

“How about the fact that any bad weather at all causes the power in my area to go out? I'm really not sure why we're not working on burying all of our lines...that would create a ton of jobs and provide more stable power to everyone. We have huge storms (and the weather is getting worse) that cause loss of power to THOUSANDS of homes and businesses, yet I never hear anyone talking about burying power lines. Its 2015 and weather and fallen tree branches cause us to lose power for days at a time IN THE UNITED STATES.”

**Robert from Sabillasville**

“Infrastructure is more than roads and schools . It also includes broadband network access [...] Having real broadband state wide we enable new businesses, support existing businesses, and enable tele-work and telecommuting which keeps cars off of the road during rush hour.”

### **SMB from Swanton**

“In Garrett County, many roads, including I 68, are often unsafe in the winter. The local road crews do an excellent job with what they have, but there are no lights and other problems to winter driving at night time and during winter storms especially. I have heard from many people that they just will not come to Garrett County during the winter because the roads are so dangerous. [...] The state of AMTRAK and passenger or commuter rail lines between Oakland, Swanton and stops in-between to Washington, D.C. and the east coast in general is a disgrace in the civilized world.”

### **Gregory from Sharpsburg**

“In 1998 the average MARC Commuter Train trip to Union Station, Washington DC from Brunswick MD took less than one hour. Now the trip is closer to 1.5 hours.”

### **Stephen from Hagerstown**

“Years ago it used to be we'd go a few hours without power and now it seems things are failing faster during storms and taking longer to come back on. This is causing a lot of heart break for seniors.”

### **Robert from Swanton**

“Why do you even need to make this case? The problem is obvious to any American who drives our nation's highways or flies in an airplane. It is especially obvious to anyone who travels to Europe, where the infrastructure is considerably better. Congress, apparently, just doesn't care. [...] As a scientist, I am less interested in individual horror stories than in large data. And the large data is clear: Our roads and bridges and airports and port facilities are rapidly deteriorating and are making us much more like a third rather than a first world country.”

### **Gay from Rockville**

“I have a husband who is in a leg brace. At age 84, he is still vital and, before his fall on the ice this past winter, he went to work every day as an engineer and contractor. Now recovering from major leg surgery, I must drive him 4 days of the week to and from physical therapy. The roads are terrible -- pot holes, overcrowded roadways, and no other choices regarding adequate transportation to and from the physical therapy center almost 15 miles away from our home. Between the poor roads, terrible traffic, and us having to stay away from major highways that

cost too much for seniors, we often spend almost two hours a day in the car. Every pot hole causes him pain. I have investigated all kinds of options and find that the best (cheapest) choice is for me to drive him and for both of us to have to endure the terrible roads. So much for the quality of life. I am not a "young chicken" myself, and I know that we must do what is best for us -- it surely would help if the roads were better, the pot holes were filled, and there was a senior citizen rate for highways that was lower for those of us who live on a fixed income.”

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