

Nescopeck Creek Bridges Video Transcript

The I-80 Nescopeck Creek Bridges help keep freight moving across Pennsylvania, connecting rural areas to vital goods. These bridges see a combined average of 33,000 vehicles per day, and 36 percent of that is truck traffic. Nearly 12,000 trucks per day, each weighing up to 80,000 lbs. put a lot of strain on two bridges built in 1965.

The existing 55-year-old bridge structures are in poor condition, showing wear and tear and approaching the end of their serviceable lifespan, which means that they require more frequent and costly repairs.

These bridges need to be replaced with wider structures that satisfy current standards. Once complete, the new bridges will improve traffic flow, extend the life of existing infrastructure and enhance traffic safety.

The challenge is, PennDOT faces an \$8.1 billion annual deficit in highway and bridge funding. The agency receives 74 percent of its funding from federal and state gas taxes, but due to better fuel efficiency of today's cars and the increased popularity of electric vehicles, this funding continues to decline as drivers buy less fuel, a trend that shows no signs of stopping.

One immediate funding solution is PennDOT's Major Bridge P3 Initiative, which is designed to raise revenue for the replacement or rehabilitation of nine major bridges across the state through tolling. Tolling means that those who use the bridge pay for the bridge and revenue from the tolls goes back into the project for maintenance and operations, allowing other important transportation projects in the region to move forward.

In Pennsylvania, every \$1 billion invested in bridge replacement or rehabilitation creates 10,493 jobs and generates \$2.2 billion for our state's economy. In fact, paying for all these projects through tolling could free up enough funds to either build 730 miles of new interstate lanes, replace 6,600 miles of guide rail or repave 1,900 miles of highways. To put that into perspective, 1,900 miles is the distance between Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The bottom line is the I-80 Nescopeck Creek Bridges Project is critical and needs to be completed. Funding this necessary replacement with bridge tolling will allow money that would have been used to pay for it to instead be spent on other important transportation projects in the region.