

I-81 Susquehanna Project Video Transcript

Each day, 27,000 vehicles crossing the Susquehanna River on Interstate 81 use the I-81 bridges in Susquehanna County. Over 11,000 of those vehicles are commercial trucks delivering essential products throughout Pennsylvania and beyond. By 2045, daily traffic is expected to reach 55,000 vehicles a day in this area and these bridges, which were built in 1961, aren't currently equipped to handle it.

In order to keep the I-81 Susquehanna Bridges in safe, working condition, PennDOT needs to address aging pavement and infrastructure along I-81 including the bridges over the Susquehanna River. This includes lengthening on and off ramps to meet current interstate design standards and improve safety.

However, as you may have heard, 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.

The Susquehanna Bridges Project alone is estimated to cost between \$175 million and \$200 million, part of the estimated \$1.6 billion to \$2.2 billion investment in these critical components of our state's infrastructure through the MBP3 Initiative. 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-81 Susquehanna 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.

Learn more about the I-81 Susquehanna Project on our website at penndot.gov/i81Susquehanna.