



American Society of Civil Engineers

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The Hon. James Oberstar
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Hon. John Mica
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

On behalf of the more than 140,000 members of the American Society of Civil Engineers we offer our strong support for the National Highway System Bridge Reconstruction Initiative.

The collapse of the I-35 W Bridge in Minneapolis is a tragedy for all victims and their families. This disaster should serve as a wake-up call to elected officials at all levels about the importance of maintaining and improving transportation infrastructure facilities. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), approximately 74,000 U.S. bridges are classified as structurally deficient. Furthermore, the U.S. DOT estimates it would cost \$65 billion to fix all existing bridge deficiencies.

This proposal is a promising display of support that has often been lacking for the problem of our nation's crumbling infrastructure. A dedicated funding source to repair, rehabilitate, and replace structurally deficient bridges on the NHS would be a good complement to the current FHWA bridge program because of the emphasis on NHS bridges. Any bridge safety program should be based on providing for public safety first.

Successfully and efficiently addressing the nation's failing infrastructure, bridges and highways and other public works systems, will require a long-term, comprehensive nationwide strategy—including identifying potential financing methods and investment requirements. For the safety and security of our families, we, as a nation, can no longer afford to ignore this growing problem. We must demand leadership from our elected officials, because without action, aging infrastructure represents a growing threat to public health, safety, and welfare, as well as to the economic well-being of our nation.

Once again, ASCE is grateful for your leadership on this most important problem. If we can be of any assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Brian Pallasch, ASCE Director of Government Relations, at (202) 789-7842 or at bpallasch@asce.org.

Sincerely yours,

Patrick J. Natale, P.E., F.ASCE
Executive Director