

## More Infrastructure Catastrophes Waiting to Happen



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Exploding steam pipes ... collapsing bridges ... rolling blackouts. What more evidence do Americans require that our vast infrastructure needs must be met before additional catastrophes occur?

The deadly collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis is the latest example of how our aging infrastructure is teetering on the brink of obsolescence. A third of America's major roads are in poor condition; a quarter of its bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete; our antiquated air traffic control system is a contributing factor in a third of all U.S. flights being cancelled or delayed in July; ports are straining under the weight of cargo volumes that are doubling or tripling; and our power and water systems are 50 to 100 years old and ill-equipped to meet growing demand.

In some ways, we have been the victims of our own success. Decades ago we built the best infrastructure the world has ever known and proceeded to take it for granted. We've allowed governments at all levels to pile on complex and overlapping regulations, making it exceedingly time-consuming to build or improve infrastructure in our country. We've learned to live with sub par performance because the deterioration has been so slow, like a trickle from a pinprick hole in a dam ... roads have slowly gotten more congested ... potholes have proliferated ... commute times have expanded ... flight delays have become more frequent ... the power goes out a little more frequently.

But that proverbial dam is beginning to spring a whole lot of leaks. Unless we do a better job of plugging up the holes we're going to have more disasters like the I-35W bridge ... or worse.

A large part of the solution must be more money--there is no way around it. But where will that money come from? What should our vision be for a world class, 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure system? Who will lead the way?

We must leave every option on the table--including spending infrastructure dollars more wisely, ensuring that states actually spend funds for their promised purpose, attracting more private investment, encouraging public-private partnerships, applying new technologies, creating a national infrastructure bank, and raising user fees.

The reasons we must rise to this challenge are compelling and clear--to save lives, clean the air, create American jobs, trade around the world, and maintain our prosperity amidst the fierce competition of a global economy.

As to who will lead the way ... business must. And we will.

How would you solve America's infrastructure crisis? Let us know!