

The Illinois Soybean Association recognizes (ISA) the importance of maintaining bridge infrastructure for the state’s overall economy and for industries specifically agriculture, which depend on a functional and reliable transportation system. Bridges are a critical component of the Illinois transportation network as they connect communities and economies, allow for greater social integration, allow emergency services to reach destinations promptly, and overall improve the quality of life for residents who rely on them daily. Bridges allow connection across natural and man-made barriers, which often divide communities and create obstacles to commerce. ISA commissioned a study to examine the economic impact bridges have within the State of Illinois specifically for bridges that reside outside the Chicago Metropolitan Area.

### Why is Investing in Bridges Important?

Bridges play a crucial role in the efficient movement of goods across Illinois, particularly benefiting the agricultural industry. By facilitating the easy traversal of natural and man-made obstacles, bridges significantly reduce travel times for trucks, leading to substantial cost savings for carriers. This efficiency not only enhances commerce but also contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing emissions from vehicles. Additionally, well-maintained bridges provide critical safety benefits, ensuring that both goods and people can travel securely. Investing in bridge infrastructure is essential for maintaining the economic vitality of the state, supporting the agricultural sector, and promoting overall public safety and environmental health.

### Study Findings

The study conducted a benefit-cost analysis for all roadway bridges within the state of Illinois based on publicly available data on removing bridges in the Chicago Metropolitan Area, and interstate bridges. These bridges were placed into the following three categories: Bridges in All Counties, The Top 13 agricultural-producing counties, and ones that will reach their useful life benchmark in 16 years. The findings found substantial benefits for investing in bridges regardless of the categories as shown below.

- Benefit-Cost Ratios
  - All Counties
    - \$4.97
  - Top 13 Agricultural Counties
    - \$3.00
  - 16 Year Useful Life Benchmark
    - \$3.59

For every dollar spent on investing in bridges Statewide there are \$4.97 dollars in benefits for all roadway users.

What is a BCR? It is an economics metric used to evaluate the overall value of money of a project comparing the total benefits from the project or investment to the total cost.

$$BCR = \frac{\text{Total Benefits}}{\text{Total Costs}}$$

These benefits are significant because they can provide long-term economic impacts to the local, regional, and state economies. Most of the freight savings are passed on to customers or reinvested in industry helping grow these economies. Utilizing the three categories, the investment in the bridges will provide employment, labor income, and value added to the economy.

- Total Jobs Related to Bridge Investment (Over 30-years)
  - All Counties
    - Jobs: 52,640
  - Top 13 Agricultural Counties
    - Jobs: 5,979
  - 16 Year Useful Life Benchmark
    - Jobs: 3,006
- Total Labor Income (Over 30-years)
  - All Counties
    - \$2,833.9 Million
  - Top 13 Agricultural Counties
    - Jobs: \$231.9 Million
  - 16 Year Useful Life Benchmark
    - Jobs: \$161.8 Million
- Total Value Added (Over 30-years)
  - All Counties
    - \$5,632.5 Million
  - Top 13 Agricultural Counties
    - \$639.8 Million
  - 16 Year Useful Life Benchmark
    - \$321.7 Million

**Continued Investment is Needed**

Illinois’s bridges need continued investment, **65% of bridges statewide are in fair or poor condition**. If not repaired or replaced bridges can have weight limit restrictions or even be closed. When a bridge is posted or closed this results in a detour adding additional cost to travel and reducing the quality of life for residents. Additionally, **statewide 72% falls outside of the jurisdiction of the State of Illinois**. Local units of government have much smaller budgets making repair or replacement more challenging.

BRIDGE CONDITION	STATEWIDE	
	Count	Percent
Good	9,521	35%
Fair	13,848	52%
Poor	3,191	12%
#N/A	313	1%
Grand Total	26,873	100%

JURISDICTION	STATEWIDE
	Percent Ownership
State	28%

County	15%
Municipal	8%
Township	47%
Other	2%