



Contact: Steve Poftak, 617-723-2277, spoftak@pioneerinstitute.org

THE NEXT TRANSPORTATION DEBACLE? IT CROSSES THE CHARLES.

*HOW DEFERRED MAINTENANCE THREATENS THE LONGFELLOW BRIDGE –
AND EVERY OTHER STATE ASSET*

BOSTON – The Longfellow Bridge, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this month, is in critical condition. It's been ravaged not only by time, but by the neglect that the Commonwealth shows all of our vital infrastructure. Now the bill is coming due.

**Our Legacy of Neglect:
The Longfellow Bridge and
Deferred Maintenance**

**A New Pioneer Institute White Paper
To Be Released Tuesday, July 31, 2007**

The Bridge needs **at least \$180 million in repairs**; even worse, the MBTA, MassHighway, UMass-Amherst, DCR and the County Sheriffs all face maintenance backlogs **exceeding \$1 billion apiece**. Across the Commonwealth **we face over \$15 billion in repair costs due to deferred maintenance**.

How has the Commonwealth prepared for this? **We haven't**. Rather than owning up to the perilous state of our assets, we continue to build new infrastructure without comprehensive plans and funding to maintain our bridges, buildings, rail lines and highways.

Our Legacy of Neglect: The Longfellow Bridge and Deferred Maintenance, by Merrimack College Professor Dave Westerling and Pioneer Institute Research Director Steve Poftak, exposes both the extent of our infrastructure's decay and the political circumstances that compound the problem, year after year.

No matter which entity is responsible, every state asset suffers from the same treatment. We fail to adequately budget for maintenance; even worse, we actively maintain perverse incentives that discourage state managers from maintaining state assets. **Most importantly, we set budgets for capital projects based on initial costs – not life-cycle costs**. We discourage proper maintenance by forcing it to compete with other needs in annual operating budgets, and understate the true life-cycle costs of new construction.

We lack a centralized system to comprehensively manage our assets. Our financial reporting system obscures maintenance spending. The responsibility for the maintenance of these assets is highly compartmentalized and responsibility for maintenance can be unclear. Most importantly, we do not account for the true cost of owning a bridge or other asset over its lifetime.

Our Legacy of Neglect makes detailed recommendations for how to stop the premature decline of our built environment (see next page):

- *All proposed building projects' budgets must include a comprehensive lifecycle maintenance and capital replacement plan.*
- *The agency responsible for maintenance of any capital asset should include in its annual operating budget an amount equal to 2 percent of the replacement value for its capital assets.*
- *The Governor' s Office should mandate, by Executive Order, the greater usage of existing asset management systems, and establish infrastructure maintenance guidelines to be followed by all state infrastructure agencies, including regular public reports on the magnitude of unfunded maintenance needs.*
- *State managers and their programs should be rewarded for sustained improvements in maintenance practices and asset condition.*

To review *Our Legacy of Neglect: The Longfellow Bridge and Deferred Maintenance*, on July 31st, please visit www.pioneerinstitute.org

[Pioneer Institute](http://www.pioneerinstitute.org) is an independent, non-partisan, privately funded research organization that seeks to change the intellectual climate in the Commonwealth by supporting scholarship that challenges the "conventional wisdom" on Massachusetts public policy issues.