

Connecticut Post, Bridgeport, CT.

<http://www.ctpost.com/opinion/article/Metro-North-woes-showcase-infrastructure-4926386.php>

On the Internet Oct. 25, 2013, and in print Oct. 26

The Advocate, Stamford, CT.

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/default/article/Metro-North-woes-showcase-infrastructure-4926386.php>

On the Internet Oct. 25, 2013, and in print Oct. 26

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<http://www.newstimes.com/default/article/Metro-North-woes-showcase-infrastructure-4926386.php>

On the Internet Oct. 25, 2013, and in print Oct. 26

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<http://www.greenwichtime.com/default/article/Metro-North-woes-showcase-infrastructure-4926386.php>

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Metro-North woes showcase infrastructure investment needs

The shutdown of the [Metro-North Railroad's](#) New Haven Line in late September, due to the failure of an old cable, created some significant challenges -- and headaches -- for Connecticut and regional commuters. Coupled with the May 17 collision between an eastbound and westbound train on the same line, I believe that this interruption in service demonstrates the state of an aging local and national infrastructure and the potential for both short- and long-term investment in transportation and public-works related industries.

Taken together, the growing number of accidents and service interruptions focus significant attention on the nation's deteriorated infrastructure and the need to begin a comprehensive program of upgrades. And that could mean a huge increase in business not only for the heavy construction business, but for other related enterprises, as well.

Of course, problems with rail service due to deteriorating infrastructure are hardly the only examples of the overwhelming need to address America's public works.

For instance, a June report from Transportation for America, a Washington, D.C.-based coalition that works to improve transportation, states that more than one in nine bridges across the country, at least 66,405 of them, are structurally deficient. These are structures that are used each

day by drivers taking an estimated 260 million trips, according to the report. The structurally deficient bridges are 65 years old on average, and the [Federal Highway Administration](#) estimates that repairing them would cost \$76 billion.

In addition to the nation's roads and bridges, there are other elements of the overall infrastructure that studies show need upgrading. A federal study, for example, shows that municipalities nationwide need more than \$300 billion worth of essential upgrades to long-overlooked water and sewer systems over the next 20 years.

The need is acute in Northeastern states with older systems like those in New York, which needs \$29.7 billion worth of improvements. New York's U.S. Sen. [Charles Schumer](#), says that price is "just a drop in the bucket" compared to the higher cost of continuing to upgrade parts of sewer and water systems when emergencies strike. He is pushing a bill that opposes planned funding cuts in the federal transportation bill being negotiated in Washington.

In late August, [American Society of Civil Engineers](#) President [Greg DiLoreto](#), testifying before the [Senate Environment and Public Works Committee](#) about the state of the nation's surface transportation infrastructure, emphasized the need for Congress to identify a long-term funding solution for the nation's surface transportation programs.

U.S. Sen. [Richard Blumenthal](#) wants Congress to investigate the rail problem in Connecticut and determine whether an immediate emergency investment is needed to prevent breakdowns in the future. Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. [Elizabeth Esty](#) sent a letter to the leaders of the [House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials](#) requesting that "the Rail Subcommittee hold a hearing to investigate deficiencies in our energy infrastructure and safety practices that threaten the reliability of rail service."

Blumenthal said he also wants "to examine and identify areas where immediate emergency investments may be necessary." The extent of these emergency requirements may well be a surprise to everyone -- and require quicker action that is generally typical of the federal government.

Industries that could benefit from a massive infrastructure program include those directly involved in road and bridge building and repair, such as concrete, asphalt and steel producers and heavy equipment companies. Also, those that manufacture the various forms of pipes and equipment used in water distribution and treatment would see an increase in business.

But the impact doesn't stop there. Other industries to watch as infrastructure upgrades take place range from manufacturers of specialized tools and equipment to staffing agencies. All in all, I believe the deteriorated infrastructure presents opportunities to make sound investments in America's future, benefiting not just investors, but the country, as well.

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