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# Transportation Construction Coalition

## NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***Deficient Highway Conditions Contribute to Half of Roadway Deaths, Leading Safety Economist Tells Senate Committee***

*Building More Forgiving Roads Would Save Lives and Cut Costs*

**(Washington, D.C.)**—More than half of the 43,000 annual U.S. highway fatalities are related to poor roadway conditions and the staggering cost to America is \$217 billion annually. That was the sobering testimony Ted R. Miller, Ph.D., delivered to an April 14 U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing on improving transportation safety.

“The cost of crashes involving deficient roadway conditions dwarf the costs of crashes involving alcohol, speeding, or failure to wear a safety belt,” Miller said. “Focusing as much on improving road safety conditions as on reducing impaired driving would save thousands of lives and billions of dollars each year.”

He also told the committee that crashes related to road deficiencies cost American businesses \$22 billion and governments \$12 billion, and result in \$12 billion in medical spending annually.

Miller, an internationally-recognized safety economist with the Beltsville-Md.-based Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation (PIRE), is the primary author of a July 2009 study, “On a Crash Course: The Dangers and Health Costs of Deficient Roadways” for the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC).

Beyond assessing costs, Miller outlined practical solutions to reduce fatalities. “Immediate solutions for problem spots include: using brighter and more durable pavement markings, adding rumble strips to shoulders, mounting more guardrails or safety barriers, and installing traffic signals and better signs with easier-to-read legends,” he said. “More significant road improvements include replacing non-forgiving poles with breakaway poles, adding or widening shoulders, improving roadway alignment, replacing or widening narrow bridges, reducing pavement edges and abrupt drop offs, and clearing more space on the roadside.”

Miller concluded his testimony telling members of the committee that the upcoming highway and transit authorization bill provided an important opportunity to make additional investments to “improve the safety built into roads and bridges.”

The PIRE report is available at: [www.transportationconstructioncoalition.org](http://www.transportationconstructioncoalition.org).

Established in 1996 and co-chaired by the American Road and Transportation Builders Association and the Associated General Contractors of America, TCC members have a direct market interest in the federal transportation program.

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