
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

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News for Immediate Release

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Auditor General DeFoor: Performance Audit of PennDOT Bridge Inspection Process Shows Need for Process Improvements

Wilkes-Barre, PA – Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor today [highlighted the need](#) for PennDOT to implement process improvements for its bridge inspections, especially those bridges rated in overall poor condition or in critical or imminent risk of failing.

“I am here to tell you as an auditor that processes matter,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “It’s important for our safety and the investment of our tax dollars that all bridge inspection reports are consistent, filed on time and the qualifications of the teams doing the inspections are readily available. By implementing the process improvements identified by our auditors, PennDOT can provide consistent reporting that ensures these bridges can be maintained, repaired and replaced without having a major bridge failure.”

Auditor General DeFoor said that a bridge rated in overall poor condition does not mean that it is about to fail and that steps need to be taken to repair or replace the bridge, but it can still be used safely while that process is ongoing.

The audit had three objectives:

- Determine the process for inspecting state-owned bridges identified as having the Overall Condition of Poor;
- Evaluate whether PennDOT complied with applicable laws, regulations, standards, policies and procedures, and guidelines regarding inspecting bridges identified as being in an Overall Condition of Poor; and
- Determine and evaluate compliance with PennDOT’s policies and procedures for responding to bridges identified as having the Condition Rating of Critical, Imminent Failure and Failed.

The audit has seven findings and made 24 recommendations. The findings and recommendations focused around ensuring PennDOT consistently followed its policies and procedures regarding the timing, writing and information included in the bridge inspection reports.

“There is a path forward to correct these issues, and for the most part, PennDOT agreed,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “PennDOT is working to reduce the number of bridges in poor condition by repairing or replacing them as time and tax dollars allow.”

Pennsylvania has the third-largest number of bridges in the nation and PennDOT is responsible for the inspection of roughly 25,400 state-owned bridges. State-owned bridges are on average more than 50

years old. During the audit period from July 1, 2020, through May 10, 2023, nearly \$1.2 billion dollars of taxpayer dollars were allocated to rehab and replace them.

Review the full audit report at www.PaAuditor.gov.

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