



I'm STUCK! in traffic

Ed Rendell July 29, 2013

There's an app to send citizens to the right people to pressure for infrastructure improvements.

Imagine this scenario. You are a little late picking up your child from day care, you rush out of your office and run straight into a massive traffic jam. Sitting behind the wheel, you fume, and you worry.

It's times like these that you wish there was something you could do. Well, now there is.

A new mobile application called I'm Stuck, developed by Building America's Future, will allow people to easily notify their congressman or senator whenever they are stuck in traffic, stuck on a tarmac, delayed on Amtrak or a subway or a bus.

In the midst of the busy summer travel season, I'm Stuck will give Americans a chance to vent about our nation's transportation and infrastructure woes. By alerting their elected representatives in Washington to the daily delays they are experiencing, users can encourage Congress to get serious about creating a long-term plan to start making the urgently needed investments in our roads, rails, runways, public transit, and ports.

Policy makers in Washington have been inundated with reports and studies by various commissions and think tanks all documenting the [ailing condition of America's infrastructure](#). We all know it's crumbling. We all know that the [Federal Highway Administration](#) has determined that too many of our bridges are structurally deficient.

But none of these reports have been enough to spur action. Even the most recent "[Report Card for America's Infrastructure](#)," issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers that gave the nation's infrastructure a D+, failed to galvanize Congress. The fact that no U.S. airport was included in The [Economist's list of the world's top 25 airports](#) hasn't moved the needle on Capitol Hill, either.

[Building America's Future](#), a bipartisan coalition of state and local elected officials that I co-chair along with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, an independent, and former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican, is hopeful that the sense of urgency in

Washington will change once Congress starts hearing directly from their frustrated constituents who are tired of wasting time, money and fuel thanks to delays caused by congestion and deteriorating infrastructure.

The law that sets policy for the nation's roads, bridges and transit systems will be expiring in September of 2014, and the funding source that pays for it – the Highway Trust Fund – [will also run dry](#). We need our elected representatives in Washington, from the president to the Congress to the new Secretary of Transportation, to start working on a long-term plan to fund these vital programs for the next decade.

It is not acceptable that the average American [commuter wasted 38 hours and 19 gallons of fuel](#) sitting in traffic in 2011, or that cities don't have enough money to upgrade or expand their overburdened transit systems. Our continued inaction cost the average American commuter \$818 a year, including time lost at work and at home with our families. How can America expect to compete in a 21st-century economy when we don't have 21st-century transportation systems?

The fact is, we are not doing very well compared to our global competitors. The [World Economic Forum ranked](#) the United States 14th in the economic competitiveness of its infrastructure. Just eight years ago, we were ranked number one. It's no wonder considering that the [U.S. invests only 1.7 percent of its GDP in transportation infrastructure](#) while Canada is investing 4 percent and China is investing 9 percent.

What America needs is a long-term plan to modernize and build the transportation systems that will keep us globally competitive, make our commutes more reliable and allow goods to move more efficiently across the country. It's time for the public to tell Washington to get America moving again. By downloading the free app, which runs on both Android and Apple devices, frustrated commuters can get out the message: "I'm Stuck."

Congress needs to hear that loud and clear. It's past time.

Ed Rendell is the former Democratic governor of Pennsylvania and a co-chair of [Building America's Future](#).