

**February 2024**

## **ADVOCACY UPDATE**

### **NTSB Finds Maintenance Failures Behind Pittsburgh Bridge Collapse, Issues Safety Fixes**

On February 21, 2024, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) held a virtual board meeting to discuss the agency's findings in their investigation into the Fern Hollow Bridge collapse in Pittsburgh in January 2022. The NTSB found critical lapses in bridge maintenance and oversight by multiple agencies led to the collapse.

Investigators determined the collapse began when the transverse tie plate on the southwest bridge leg failed due to extensive corrosion and section loss caused by the continual accumulation of water and debris. Though multiple maintenance and repair recommendations were documented in many inspection reports, the city of Pittsburgh failed to act on them, leading to the bridge's failure. In addition to the city's inaction, the NTSB found that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation did not accurately identify fracture-critical areas on the bridge's legs or calculate load ratings. The NTSB found that insufficient city, state, and federal oversight led to the collapse.

The NTSB is issuing 11 new recommendations to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), PennDOT, the city of Pittsburgh, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation officials to address safety issues identified in the report and to ensure other bridges in Pittsburgh and nationwide are appropriately inspected and maintained. The final report will be available on the NTSB website in several weeks.

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