

Highway Back-Ups Cost Marylanders Billions



Kai Jackson
Reporting

(WJZ) BALTIMORE The gridlock we face on Maryland highways is costing us billions.

Kai Jackson reports a potential solution is being provided.

You could call it the Baltimore back-up. Gridlocked traffic has Marylanders in Baltimore and elsewhere seeing red.

It can be a stomach churning, brake riding experience.

"A lot of quality time that we're sitting in this car, they're cramped, and they're hungry. You know, it gets irritating," said Jennifer Jacobs of Hampden.

According to Texas A&M University's Transportation Institute, traffic congestion costs Marylanders about \$3.1 billion.
Baltimore loses an estimated \$1 billion.

Don Fry with the Greater Baltimore Committee says Maryland has delayed finding solutions to its traffic problems.

"It's tougher for people to get to work. It's tougher for people to deliver their goods and their services," said Fry.

According to the study, the losses are from fuel, time, and economic waste.

"The governor has proposed \$400 million. We think that's just treading water. We need to have a \$600 million investment in transportation to effectively address the congestion issues confronting the state," said Fry.

"Can we do a lot with \$400 million? Yes, we absolutely can. Can we do more with each additional dollar? Sure, we could," said Jack Cahalan of the Department Of Transportation.

Still some say all the traffic problems can't be measured in dollars and cents.

"I could be home doing so much more important things with the kids," said Jacobs.

The study says rush hour traffic has grown 71 percent from 1982 to 2003.