



# **Are Highways Really “Crumbling”?**

## **20-Year Trends in Road Condition**

**A Presentation to the  
American Legislative Exchange Council**

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**A Study Supported by the  
Reason Foundation**

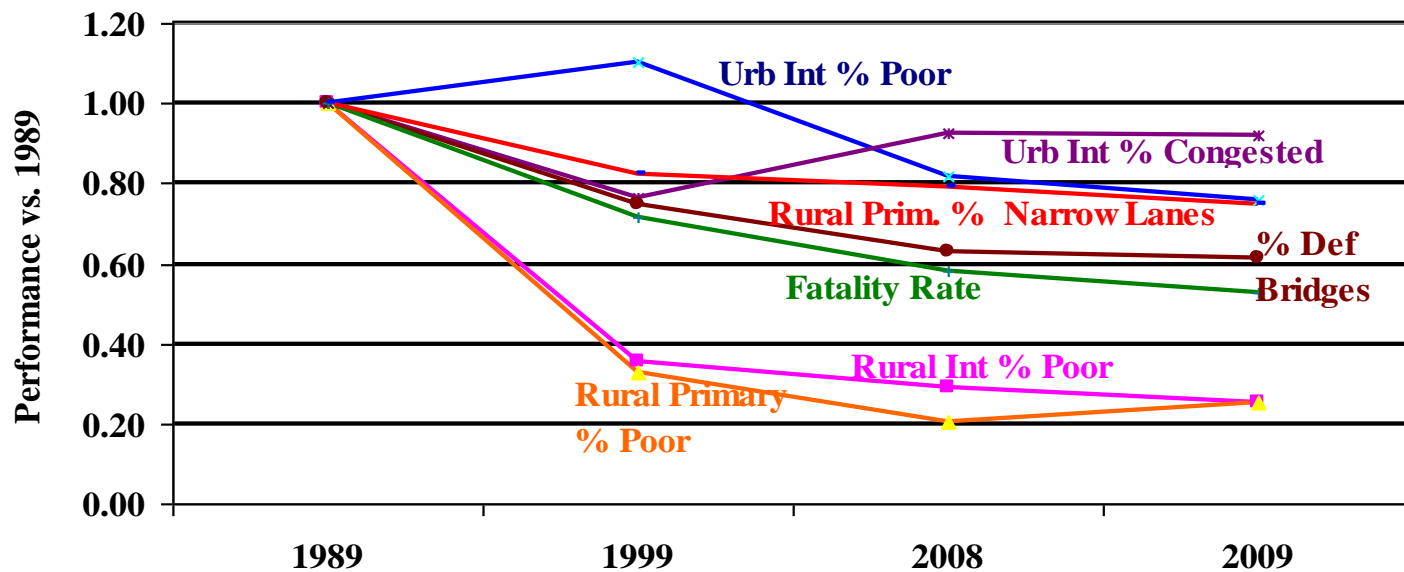
# Issues for State Legislatures

- Highway access is essential for economic progress
- Key Questions for States
  - How is My System doing?
  - How Much should we spend ?
  - How should we spend it ?
  - What will be the Results ?
- Peer comparisons give perspective

# Data Sources

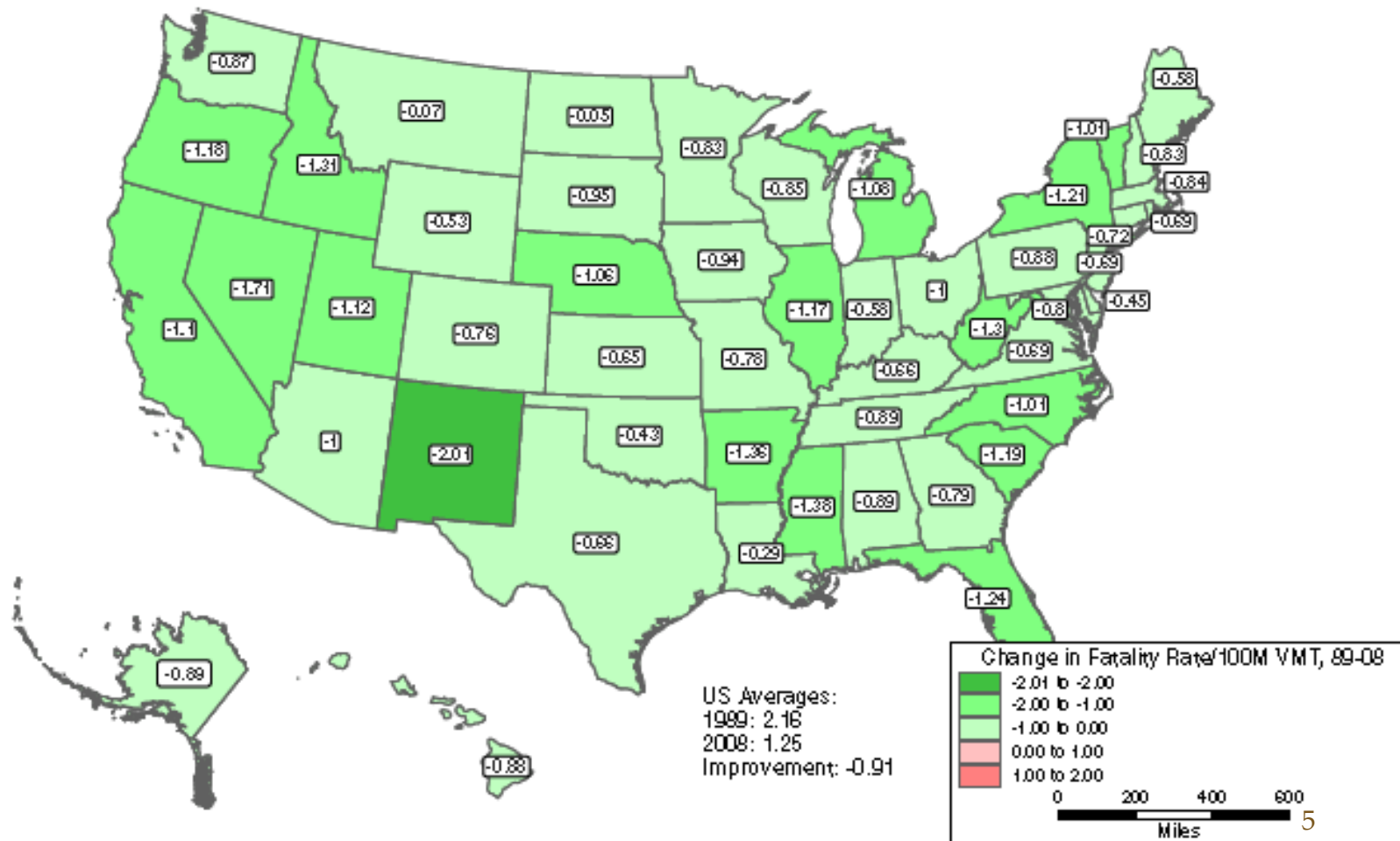
- Highway Performance Monitoring System
- National Bridge Inventory
- Fatal Accident Reporting System
- Urban Congestion Reports
- 1989-2008 (09)
  - Higher systems only
  - Definition changes (Congestion)
  - 2 year delay

# National Trends, 1989-2009



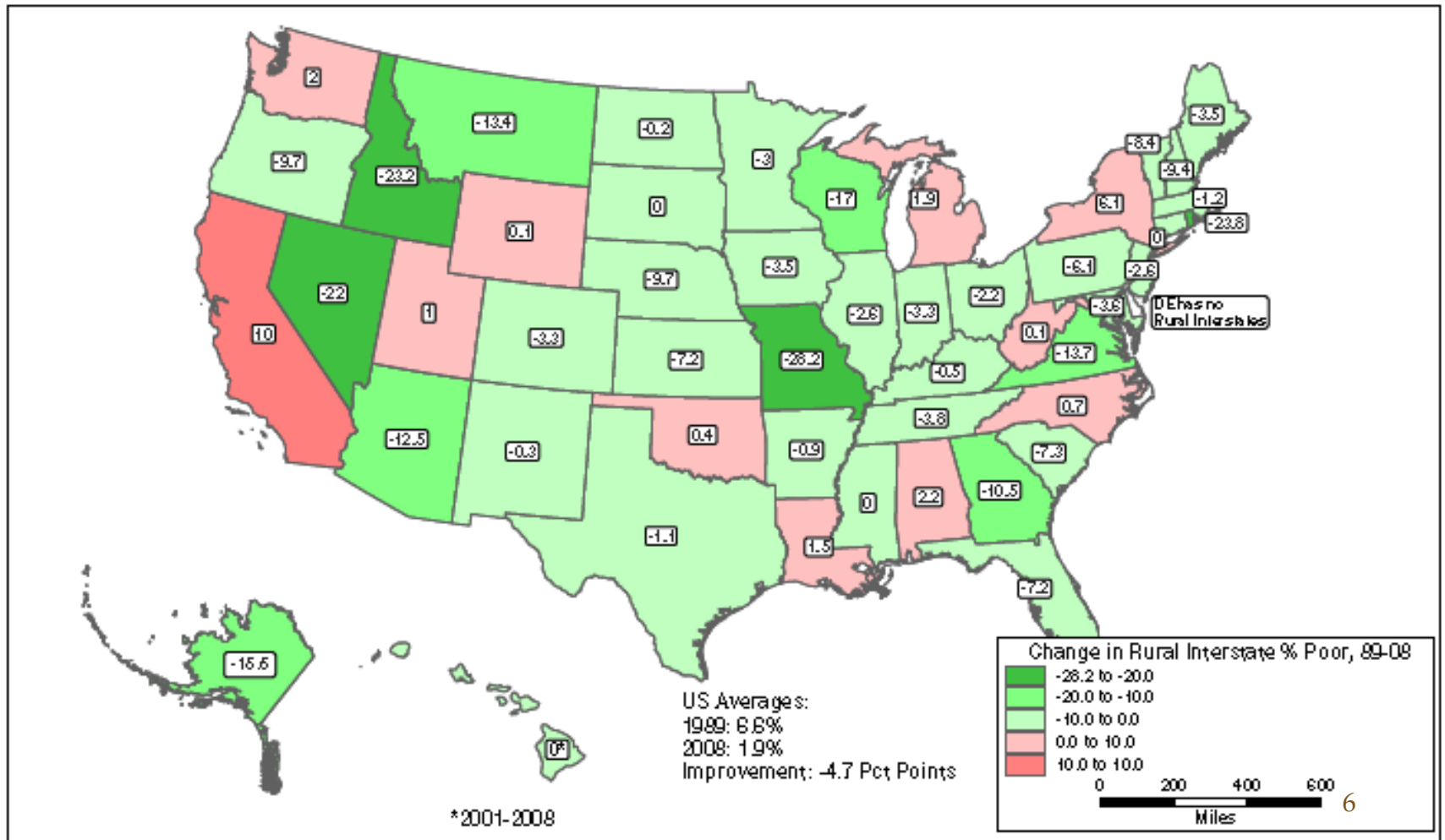
# Highway Fatalities

## Change in Fatality Rate, 1989-2008

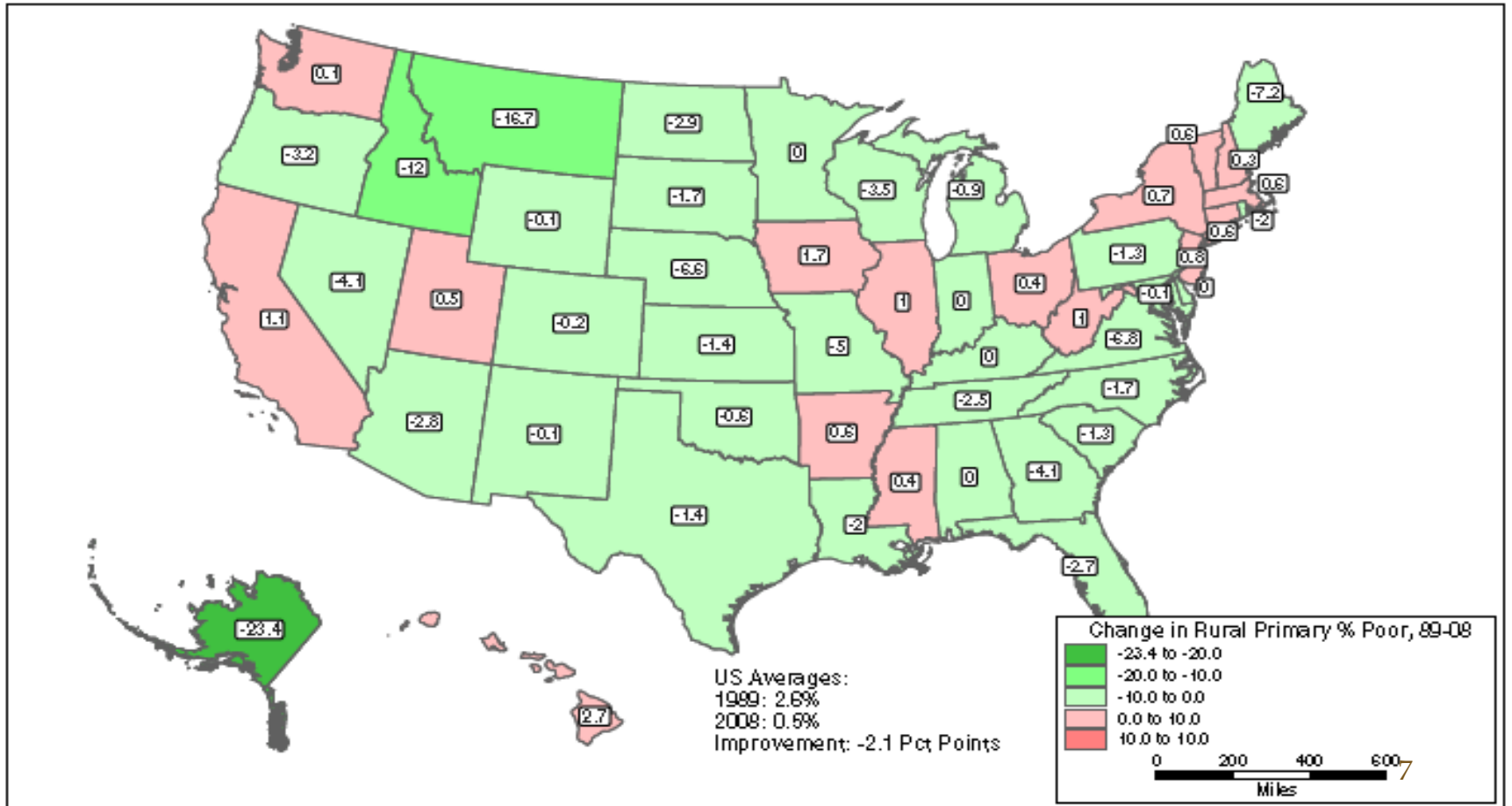


# Rural Interstate Condition

## Change in % Poor Pavement, 1989-2008



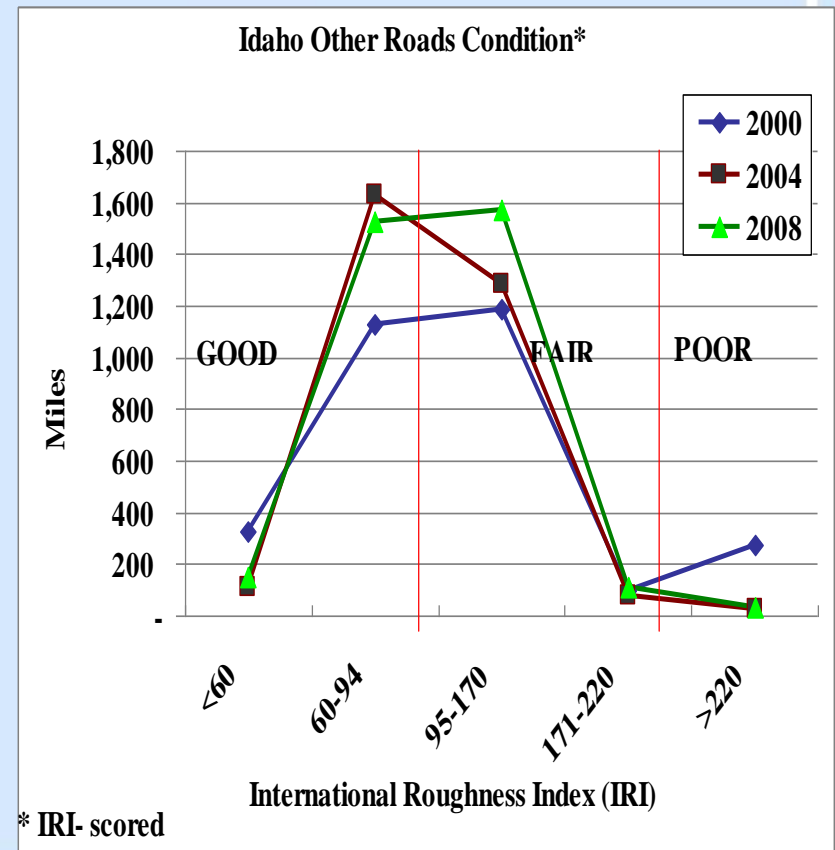
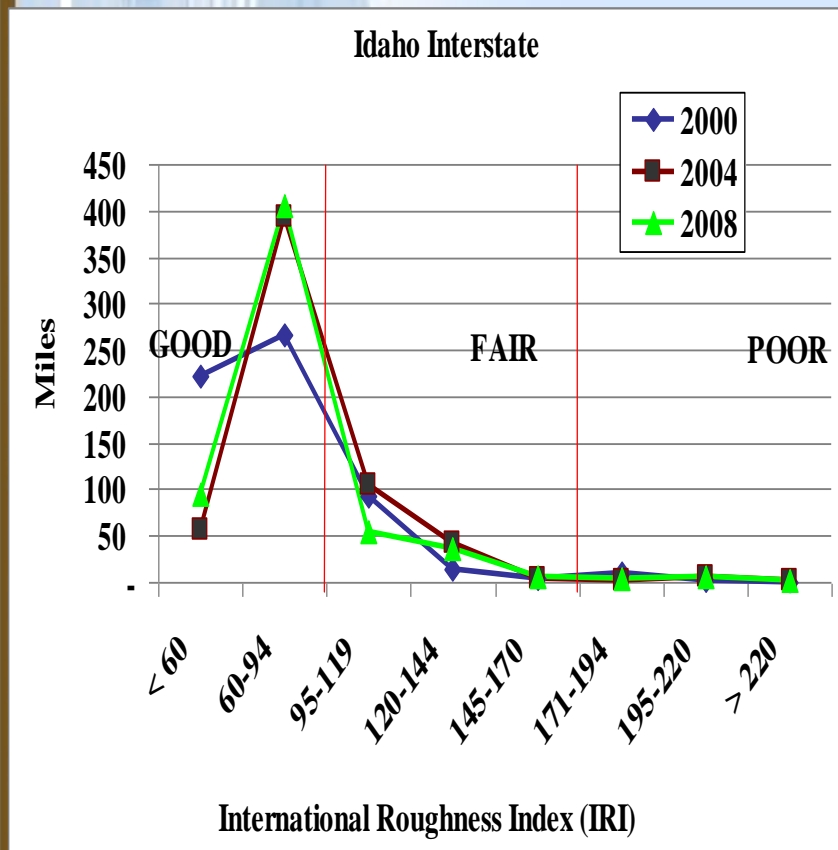
# Rural Primary Road Condition: Change in % Poor Pavement, 1989-2008



# Idaho Road Condition Trends

## Interstate System

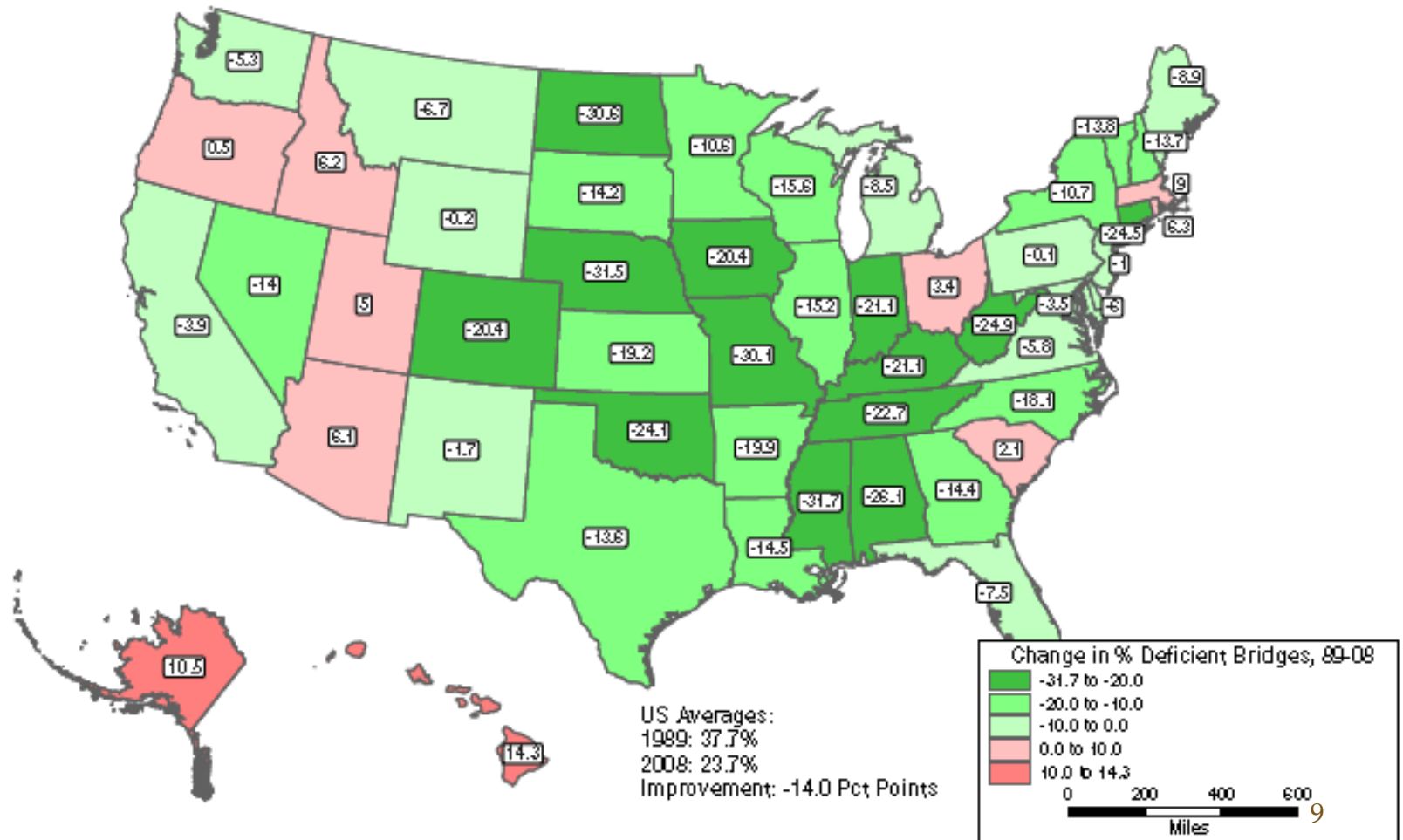
## Lower Systems





# Deficient Bridges

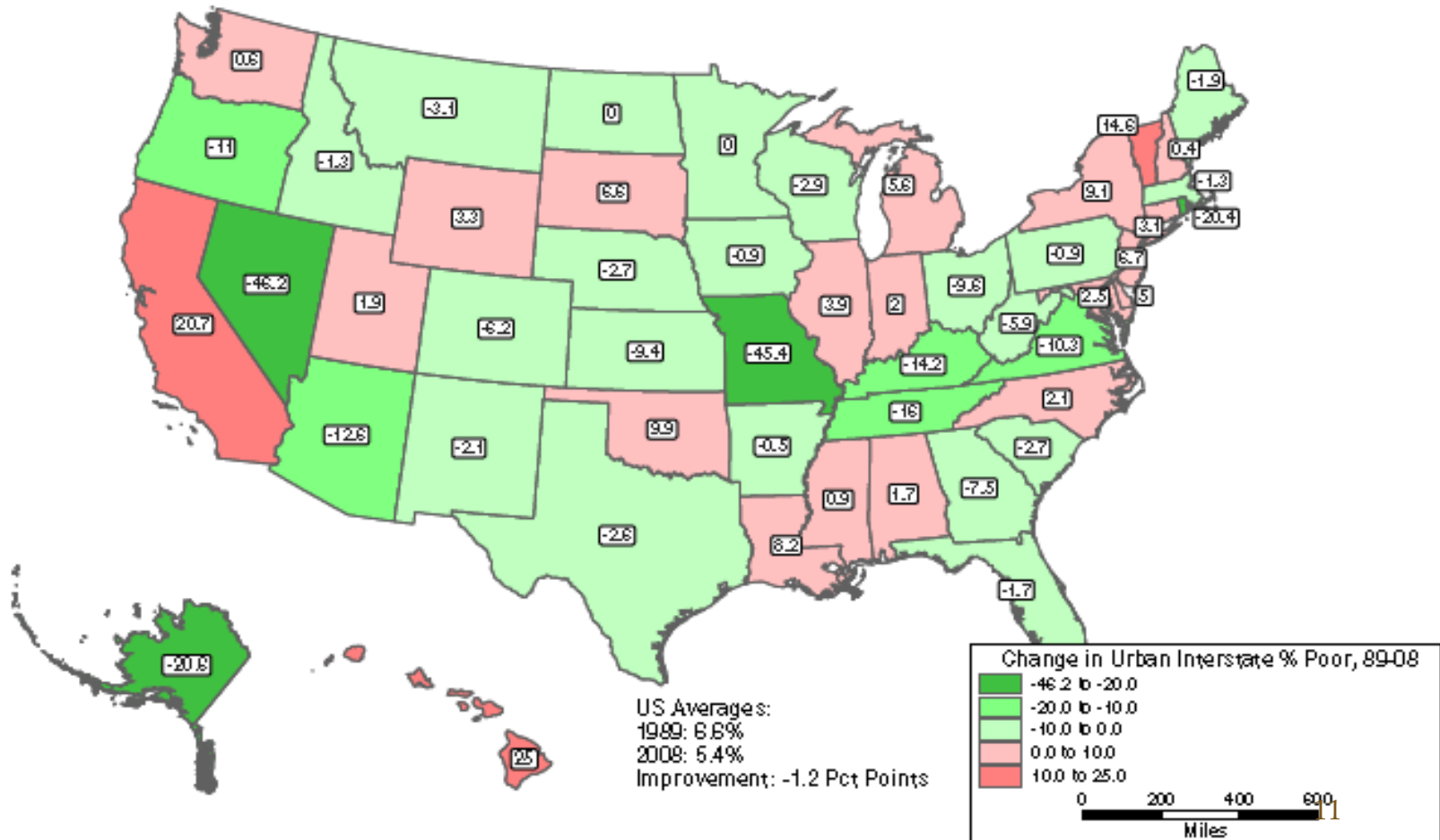
## Change in % Deficient, 1989-2008





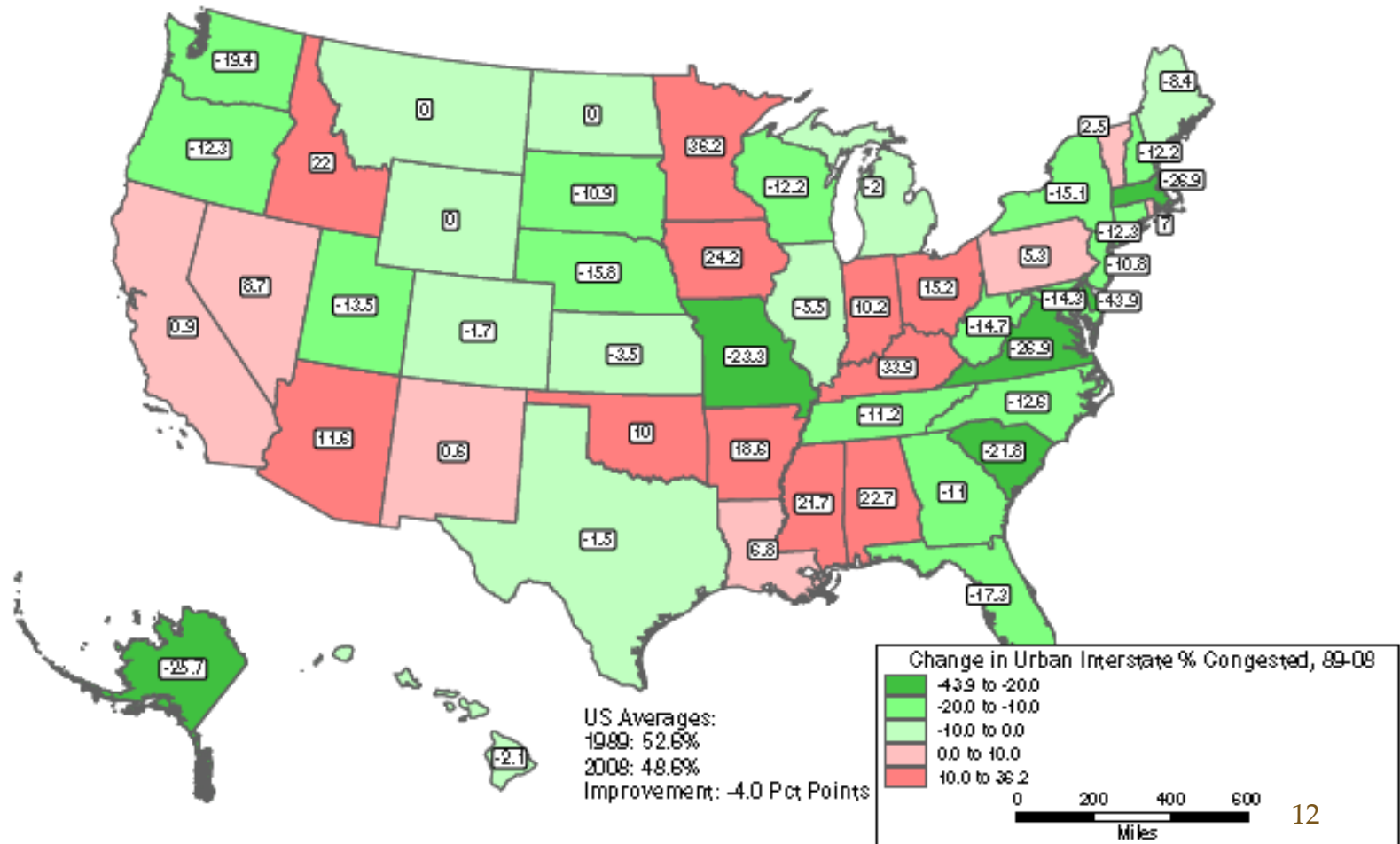
# Urban Interstate Condition

## Change in % Poor Pavement, 1989-2008



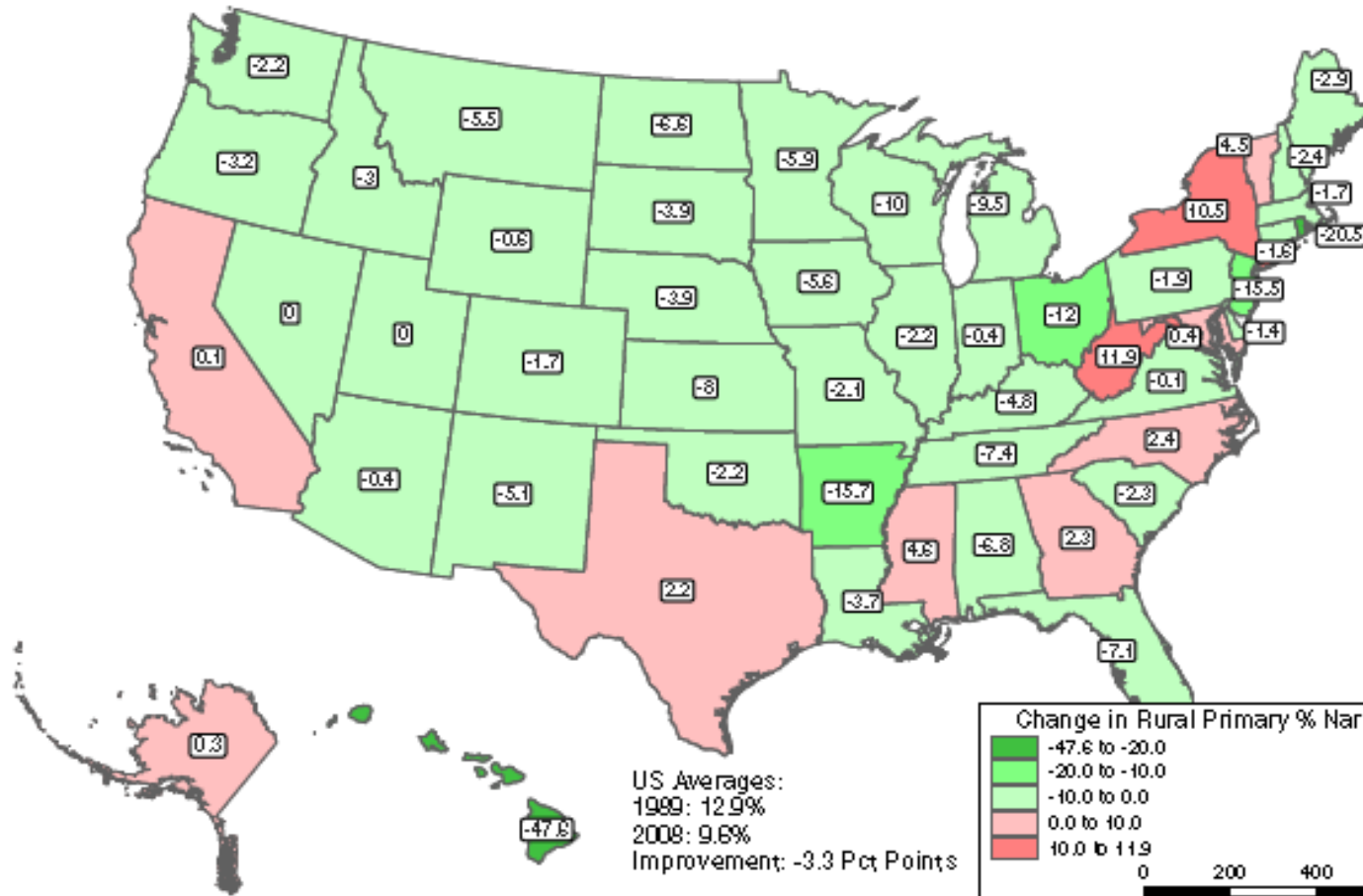
# Urban Interstate Congestion

## Change in % Congested, 1989-2008



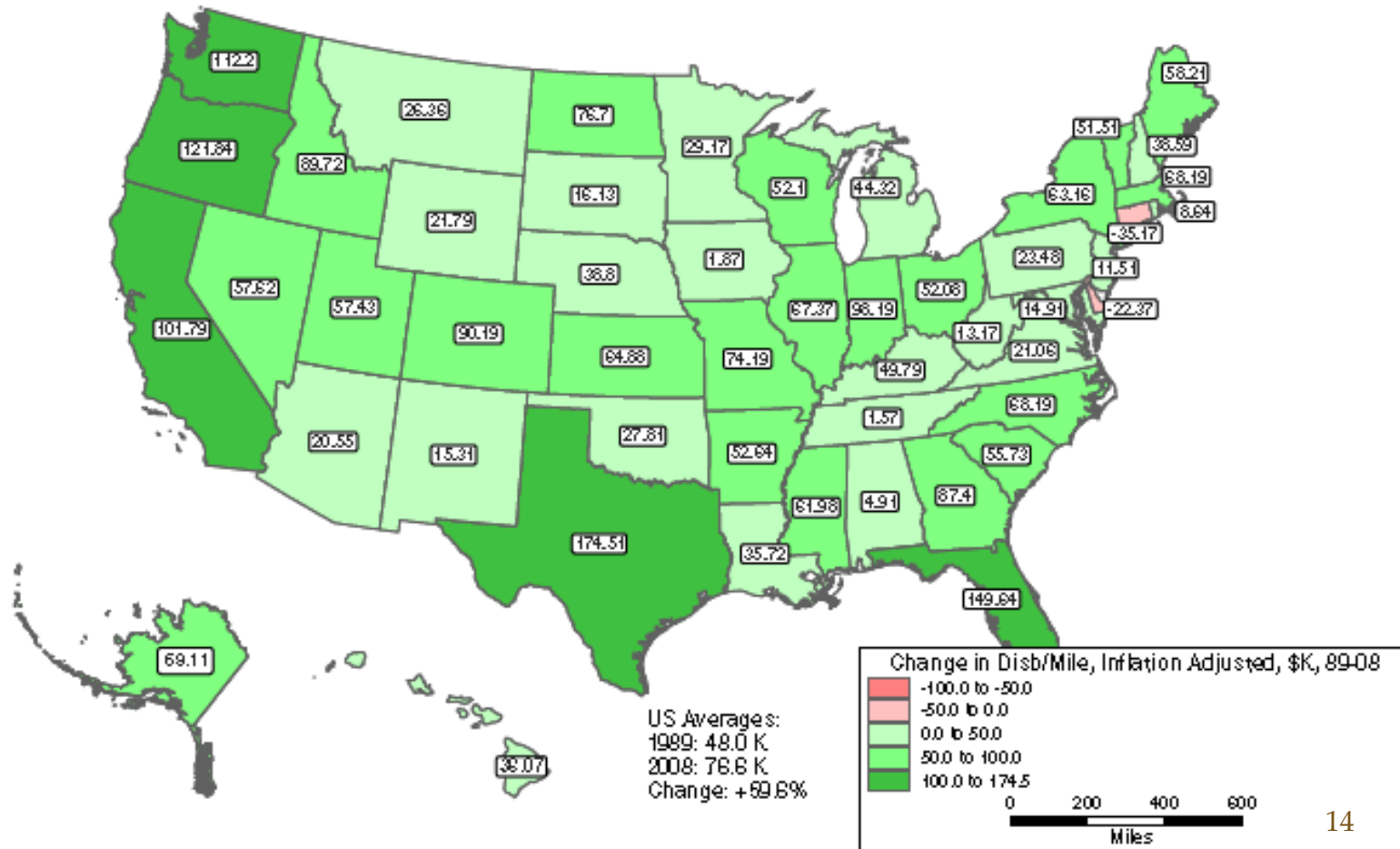
# Rural Primary Narrow lanes

## Change in % Narrow, 1989-2008

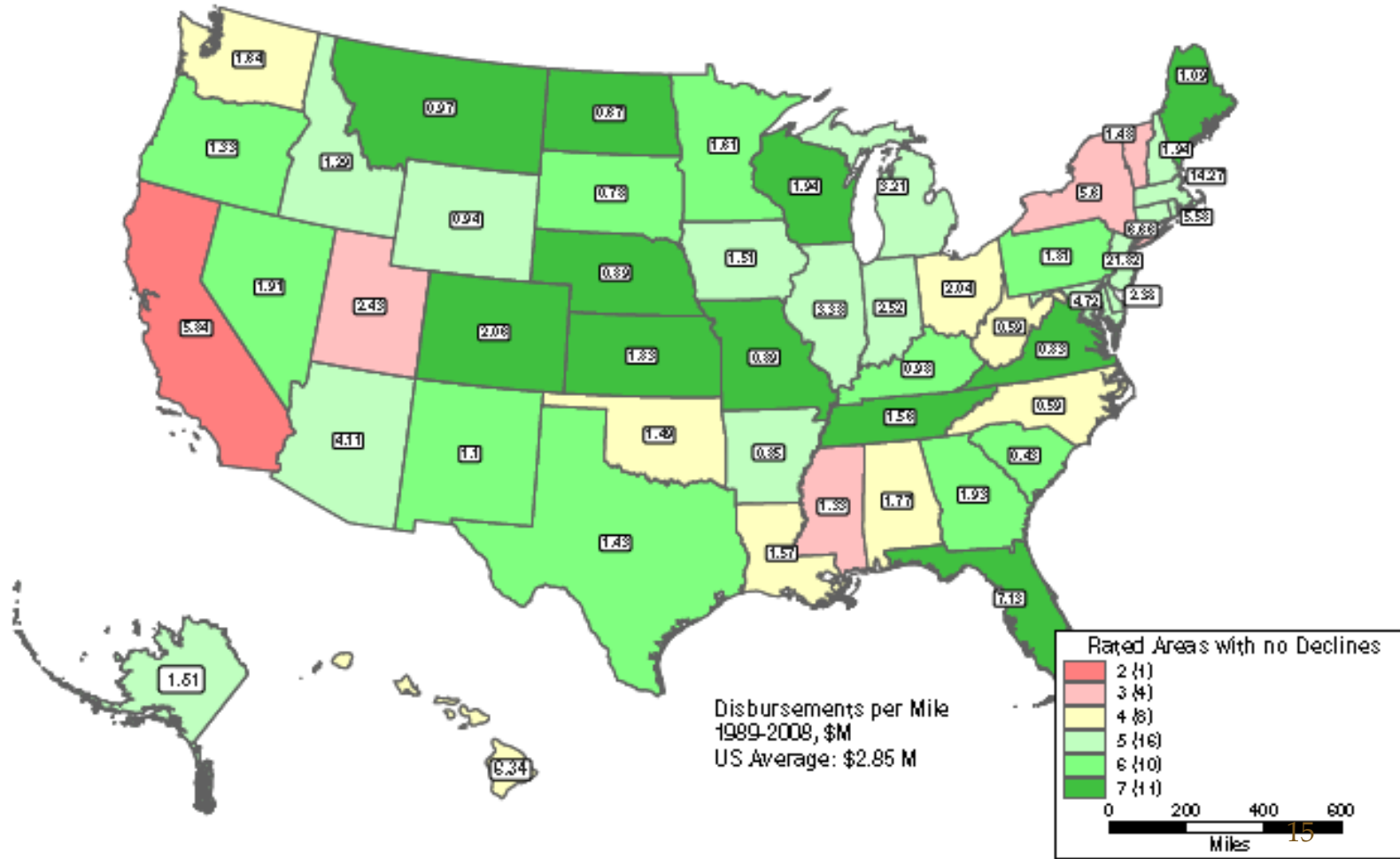


# Disbursements

## Inflation-Adjusted Percent Change, 1989-2008



# Does Money Improve Performance?



# Summary

- All 7 measures improved, 1989-2008
- Most improved on 4-7 measures
- BUT: Improvement is slowing
- AND: Widening gaps
  - Rural vs. urban systems
  - Higher vs. lower systems
  - 4-7 States are struggling.
- Expenditure  $\neq$  Improvement !



# Keys to a Better Road System

- Stable, Adequate Funds
- Limit Diversion and Debt
- Professional Management / Oversight
- Modern Data Systems
- 'Maintenance' Focus
- Realistic Plans (STIP, LRTP, Vision)
- Select Projects by Lifetime Benefit/Cost
- Value Engineering / Competitive Bids

# Suggestions for Legislatures

- Periodic Status / Oversight Review
  - Independent , compare to peers
  - Condition trends by sub-state
  - Allocate \$ by Condition and Vision
- Annual 'Revenue Review'
  - Federal monitoring
- Cost-Cutting Actions
  - Project selection, engineering, competition
- Monitor Local Roads and Bridges

# Suggestions for ALEC

- “Good Roads, Bad Roads”
  - What Affects Performance ?
- Bending the Cost Curve
- Economic Impacts
- PPP Trends and Potential
- Transit Use and Funding

## For More Information:

- **Report:** [www.reason.org](http://www.reason.org)  
(Spring 2012)
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