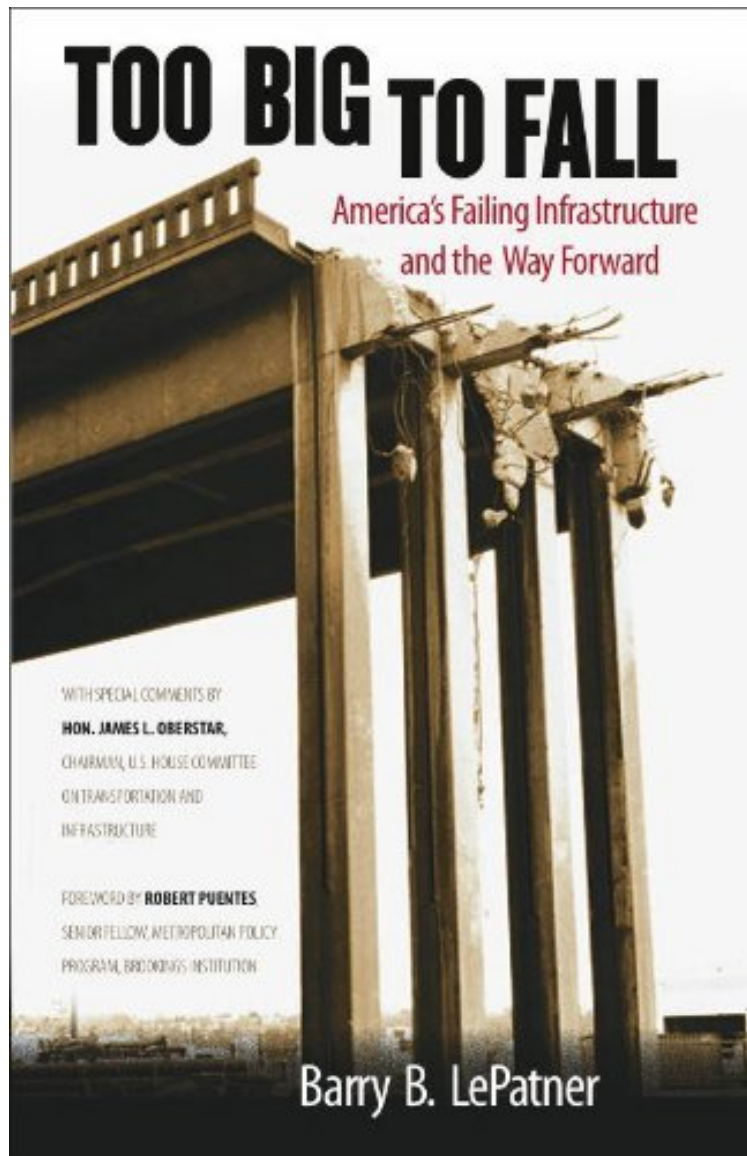


## Too Big to Fall

*Barry B. LePatner*

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**Barry B. LePatner : Too Big to Fall** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Too Big to Fall:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Failure of Highway InfrastructureBy Michael R. BurrLePatner studies the history of the maintenance and ultimate outcomes of two bridges -- one in Minneapolis that collapsed, and one in New York City that was closed and repaired before it could collapse, and tries to draw conclusions concerning all of America's under-maintained highway infrastructure. While informative and comprehensive, the writing is somewhat dull and the author uses too many initials for too many agencies, making he narrative hard to follow.

Nevertheless, this book is must reading for members of Congress and government officials responsible for bridges, tunnels and highways because, as LePatner convincingly concludes, our national road and highway system is at grave risk of decay and collapse because not enough money and attention is paid to maintenance and bringing sub-standard structures up to current engineering standards. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. OK, but a little wandering...By Michelle Doyle The author has obviously done his homework on the topic. However, the last few chapters of the book seem to wander a little from point to point. The author seems to even contradict himself from time to time. His chapter on the way forward presents very few real world solutions. This is a good introductory book into bridge management and inspection in the United States, but it doesn't really present a whole picture. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Written by a lawyer By G. Book I felt that the author was laying the case for a trial; placing blame and establishing facts. May be more interesting for legal buffs, not engineers.

In August 2007, the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis collapsed, killing 13 people and injuring 145 others. Investigations following the tragedy revealed that it was not an unavoidable accident, but one that could have been prevented—and one that threatens to be repeated at many thousands of bridges located across the nation. Already more than 50 percent of our bridges are past their intended lifespan. Using the I-35W Bridge as a starting point, LePatner chronicles the problems that led to that catastrophe; poor bridge design, shoddy maintenance, ignored expert recommendations for repair, and misallocated funding—and then explores the responses to the tragedy, including the NTSB document which failed to report the full story to our nation. From here LePatner evaluates what the I-35W Bridge collapse means for the country as a whole; outlining the possibility of a nationwide infrastructure breakdown. He exposes government failure on a national as well as state level, uncovering how our nation's transportation system prioritizes funding for new projects over maintenance funding for aging infrastructure. He explains the imperatives for why we must maintain an effective infrastructure system, and how it plays a central role in supporting both our nation's economic strength and our national security. Written both for those who can effect change and for those who must demand it, *Too Big to Fall* presents an eye-opening critique of a bureaucratic system that has allowed political best interests to trump those of the American people.

From Booklist The deadly collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis awakened Americans to the perils of our aging infrastructure, but as LePatner points out, it was a disaster years in the making. In this painstaking analysis of both the Minneapolis tragedy and other structural failures, he reveals that government failures at every level have resulted in our reliance on roads and bridges that were never designed to sustain the volume of traffic we now generate. Politics plays a huge part here, but so does the problem of keeping the public interested in a vital yet dull subject. Citing Willa Cather's *Alexander's Bridge*, LePatner points out that "engineers were once a type of American cultural hero." Poems were written about them; they remade the landscape and transformed the country. That was the era of "steel and concrete," however, when expansion was the story that mattered. LePatner makes it clear that today's problems of management and maintenance are just as important, and require a similar commitment. Detailed and determined, this is a call to arms ignored at our own peril. --Colleen Mondor "This well-researched book on the US's failure to maintain its bridges and highways straddles political advocacy and scholarly work. . . . The chapters on the history of highway funding in the US, public-private partnerships, and the causes of systemic failures to maintain what has been built are excellent. . . . [This is] an excellent book for students and professionals, which one hopes will heighten the sense of urgency to increase funding for highway and bridge maintenance. There is no comparable book. The index and 37 pages of endnotes are excellent. Highly recommended." Choice