



I-40 Emergency Bridge Closure Affects Supply Chain

On Tuesday afternoon, the Arkansas Department of Transportation advised that a routine inspection of the I-40 Hernando DeSoto Bridge revealed a significant fracture that required further investigation. The decision was made to close the bridge to all vehicles at that time. River traffic under the bridge was also shut down as a precautionary measure. The Coast Guard has subsequently determined that waterborne transit under the I-40 bridge is safe and it has resumed. As of this morning, however, there were 62 vessels and over 1000 barges on the Mississippi River waiting for clearance to pass under the bridge.

This bridge stretches over the Mississippi River and serves as a connection point between Arkansas and Tennessee. According to Arkansas Department of Transportation, of the nearly 41,000 vehicles that cross the I-40 bridge on a daily basis, approximately 30% are commercial trucks. The bridge closure will significantly impact supply chains as the crossing is a critical component of the third busiest freight corridor in the United States. Sources indicate that it could be months before the bridge is repaired and once again open to truck crossings.

Currently, all interstate traffic crossing the Mississippi River through Memphis is being rerouted to the I-55 bridge. This in turn is causing massive delays in transit time as well as missed rail/warehouse pick-up and drop-off appointment times. The bridge closure is also expected to have an effect on export bookings as truckers fail to deliver containers by the rail cutoff dates.

We suggest you discuss this matter with your clients in the event there are delays with their shipments moving through this area. We will continue to monitor the situation.

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