



Too Big to Fall

Barry B. LePatner

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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.

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