

Regional Variations Persisted As VMT Recovered Somewhat in May

By Jeff Davis



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This week, the Federal Highway Administration released its estimates of vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) on a state-by-state basis and broken down by type of road, for the month of May 2020. Total U.S. VMT was up 27 percent in May from April (the peak of coronavirus lockdowns and stay-home orders), but was still 26 percent below May 2019.

U.S. Motor Vehicle Travel (Billions of VMT)

	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>
2019	248.3	226.7	271.5	281.5	286.1
2020	253.7	231.7	220.1	168.3	213.2
Change	+5.4	+5.0	-51.4	-113.2	-72.9
<i>Pct.</i>	+2.2%	+2.2%	-18.9%	-40.2%	-25.5%

The [April 2020 estimates](#) showed variation in the levels of reduced VMT (from the April 2019 estimates) based on population density – the highest-density states like Connecticut and Maryland saw their VMT reduced by almost 50 percent from April 2019, while some low-density states were at 25 to 30 percent reduction (Wyoming and Arkansas were down 26.6 percent, Montana down 31.0 percent).

The [May numbers](#) show these divergences remaining steady as lockdowns eased and VMT increased from the previous month. Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia were down about 36 to 38 percent from May 2019, while Montana was only down 14 percent and Wyoming and Oklahoma were only down 16 percent.

There are also regional variations that defy density. Michigan and Georgia have almost identical population density (157 and 177 persons per square mile, respectively, in 2015), but their governors



have chosen vastly different approaches to coronavirus. In May, Georgia's VMT was down an estimated 23 percent versus May 2019, but Michigan's VMT was down 36 percent from a year ago.

<u>State</u>	<u>2020 VMT</u>	<u>2019 VMT</u>	<u>Pct. Change</u>
Alabama	5,393	6,523	-17.3%
Alaska	448	549	-18.4%
Arizona	5,242	6,281	-16.5%
Arkansas	2,693	3,167	-15.0%
California	21,361	28,792	-25.8%
Colorado	3,458	4,521	-23.5%
Connecticut	1,799	2,882	-37.6%
Delaware	592	872	-32.1%
District of Columbia	215	337	-36.2%
Florida	15,248	20,035	-23.9%
Georgia	9,555	12,438	-23.2%
Hawaii	437	722	-39.5%
Idaho	1,244	1,482	-16.1%
Illinois	6,643	9,443	-29.7%
Indiana	5,335	6,998	-23.8%
Iowa	2,438	3,038	-19.7%
Kansas	2,190	2,732	-19.8%
Kentucky	3,410	4,411	-22.7%
Louisiana	3,521	4,297	-18.1%
Maine	927	1,313	-29.4%
Maryland	3,606	5,499	-34.4%
Massachusetts	3,666	5,806	-36.9%
Michigan	5,640	8,808	-36.0%
Minnesota	4,079	5,468	-25.4%
Mississippi	2,942	3,627	-18.9%
Missouri	5,227	6,632	-21.2%
Montana	911	1,062	-14.2%
Nebraska	1,449	1,857	-22.0%
Nevada	1,872	2,587	-27.6%
New Hampshire	834	1,184	-29.6%
New Jersey	4,697	7,062	-33.5%
New Mexico	1,890	2,446	-22.7%
New York	7,684	11,631	-33.9%



North Carolina	8,270	11,272	-26.6%
North Dakota	635	810	-21.6%
Ohio	7,448	10,054	-25.9%
Oklahoma	3,151	3,749	-16.0%
Oregon	2,429	3,237	-25.0%
Pennsylvania	6,287	9,020	-30.3%
Rhode Island	489	696	-29.7%
South Carolina	4,135	5,221	-20.8%
South Dakota	664	840	-21.0%
Tennessee	6,030	7,276	-17.1%
Texas	18,869	24,304	-22.4%
Utah	2,170	2,713	-20.0%
Vermont	404	616	-34.4%
Virginia	5,283	7,767	-32.0%
Washington	4,111	5,867	-29.9%
West Virginia	988	1,322	-25.3%
Wisconsin	4,451	5,985	-25.6%
Wyoming	742	880	-15.7%