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The Nanticoke/West Nanticoke Bridge over the Susquehanna River is closed due to recent inspection findings, Luzerne County Manager Romilda Crocamo announced Thursday.
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Crocamo said closure of the county-owned span is necessary “in the interest of public safety” because the inspection detected advanced deterioration of load-carrying bridge components, according to an email she sent to council.

The closure will be permanent as the county pursues bridge replacement options, Crocamo said.

The county is in the process of selecting an engineer who must come up with three options to address the bridge.

In addition to \$10 million in federal funding allocated through the state for this project, the county has access to a \$55 million casino gambling fund established for county infrastructure.

The weight limit of the bridge was reduced to 5 tons last May, which allows passenger vehicles but not fire trucks and emergency rescue vehicles.

Inspections were required every six months due to the bridge’s condition, officials had said.

Totaling 2,072 feet, the bridge connects Nanticoke and the West Nanticoke section of Plymouth Township. The crossing was constructed in 1914 and last rehabilitated in 1987.

Three options were already presented for the bridge early last year by Alfred Benesch and Associates, which had been hired by the county before federal funding was involved.

However, the county must start from scratch in determining a solution for the bridge because federal funding has been allocated to the project through the state, officials have said. Benesch’s work thus far cannot be applied to the final project because the selection process for the engineer must go through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation procurement system, officials have said.

Crocamo said the county is working in coordination with PennDOT to implement the closure, promising additional information at a later date.

“The public’s cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated,” Crocamo said.