

# Office of the Auditor General

## Preliminary Survey Summary

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### **Blue Water Bridge**

#### Michigan Department of Transportation

August 2025

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State of Michigan Auditor General  
Doug A. Ringler, CPA, CIA

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The auditor general shall conduct post audits of financial transactions and accounts of the state and of all branches, departments, offices, boards, commissions, agencies, authorities and institutions of the state established by this constitution or by law, and performance post audits thereof.

The auditor general may make investigations pertinent to the conduct of audits.



# OAG

Office of the Auditor General

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**Doug A. Ringler, CPA, CIA**  
Auditor General

August 28, 2025

Michael D. Hayes, Chair  
State Transportation Commission  
and  
Bradley C. Wieferich, PE, Director  
Michigan Department of Transportation  
Murray D. Van Wagoner Building  
Lansing, Michigan

Chair Hayes and Director Wieferich:

This is our preliminary survey summary of the Blue Water Bridge, Michigan Department of Transportation. Because we did not identify significant concerns to warrant the additional use of our audit resources, we decided to terminate this performance audit.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during our preliminary survey. If you have any questions, please call me or Laura J. Hirst, CPA, Deputy Auditor General.

Sincerely,

Doug Ringler  
Auditor General



# PRELIMINARY SURVEY SUMMARY

## BLUE WATER BRIDGE

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### RESULTS

Our preliminary survey did not identify significant concerns to warrant the additional use of our audit resources to complete a performance audit. Therefore, we terminated this project and did not conduct sufficient testing to conclude on the Blue Water Bridge's (BWB's) overall effectiveness and efficiency.

### FACTORS IMPACTING AUDIT TERMINATION

- We reviewed 84 toll transactions and determined all transactions were accurately recorded.
- We reviewed 5 BWB daily reconciliations and determined toll revenue recorded in the toll software, Arcadis, accurately reconciled with the electronic payment software, Converge, and the Statewide Integrated Governmental Management Applications (SIGMA).
- We reviewed 17 maintenance work orders and determined maintenance was completed timely.
- We physically verified 25 tagged inventory items and determined BWB:
  - Maintained an accurate log of tagged equipment inventory.
  - Completed annual tagged equipment inventories for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.
- We physically verified 8 fleet inventory vehicles and determined the vehicles were present and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) maintained an accurate log of BWB fleet inventory.
- We reviewed 17 procurement card logs containing 143 purchases and determined the transactions appeared reasonable and compliant with State of Michigan procurement card rules.
- We reviewed the BWB employee training records and determined:
  - The records were complete.
  - BWB employees completed all training required by BWB and MDOT.
- We reviewed the user access list for the BWB toll software and determined all users with access to the toll software were appropriate.

## BACKGROUND

**Description:** BWB is a major international crossing spanning the St. Clair River connecting Port Huron, Michigan and Point Edward, Ontario. MDOT is responsible for effectively maintaining and operating the two western halves of the BWB spans owned by the State of Michigan and all supporting facilities, in compliance with State regulations. BWB is self-supported by its toll, leasing, and duty-free revenue, and excess revenue is deposited into its capital projects fund.

BWB's first span was built in 1938 and the second in 1997. Each span is approximately 1.2 miles in length. The spans and supporting infrastructure are inspected annually by an independent engineering firm. The BWB plaza is currently undergoing major renovation and expansion. Customs and Border Patrol is responsible for security and customs enforcement at the border and is the first responder, along with local law enforcement, for incidents at BWB.

**Revenues:** BWB collected \$67.8 million in toll, lease, and duty-free revenue between October 1, 2022 and April 30, 2025. Total bridge crossings in calendar year 2024 were 4.0 million. The toll rate for a standard vehicle is \$4.00, and a five-axle truck is \$21.25 (see supplemental information).

**Expenditures:** BWB expended \$18.3 million between October 1, 2022 and April 30, 2025 for normal operations and \$69.6 million in capital improvements between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2024. The capital expenditures were for plaza improvement and expansion.

**Employees:** As of June 13, 2025, BWB had 38 full-time employees and 6 contracted employees.

## SCOPE

Our preliminary survey generally covered October 1, 2023 through June 15, 2025 and included a limited review of the following BWB activities:

- Toll collection, toll adjustments, and expenditures.
- Bridge maintenance.
- Inventory records and management.
- Procurement card purchases.
- Employee training.
- System user access.

## PURPOSE

Within a performance audit, we design the preliminary survey to obtain an understanding of the core activities within an entity or a program and to identify potential program improvements and/or

deficiencies which could impair management's ability to conduct its operations in an effective and efficient manner. If the results of a preliminary survey do not identify significant concerns, our practice is to terminate the planned performance audit.

Preliminary survey procedures are limited in nature and should not be considered a completed performance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. In addition, our preliminary survey procedures would not necessarily disclose the presence or absence of any material conditions and/or reportable conditions. Given the procedures we employed did not constitute a performance audit, we will not issue a performance audit report, and we do not express conclusions regarding BWB's effectiveness or efficiency.

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

UNAUDITED  
Exhibit 1

BLUE WATER BRIDGE  
Michigan Department of Transportation

Map of Selected Toll Bridges With Rate Information  
October 1, 2023 Through June 15, 2025



Note: Bridge locations are approximate.

*This exhibit continued on next page.*



BLUE WATER BRIDGE  
Michigan Department of Transportation

Map of Selected Toll Bridges With Rate Information  
As of June 2025

| Bridge/Tunnel                               | Bridge Location (Connection)  | United States of America (USA) Toll Rate 2025 USD |                        |                              |                 | 2024 Total |   |
|---|---|---|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---|
|   |   | Passenger Vehicles                                |                        | Commercial<br>Truck (5-Axle) | Bus<br>(2-Axle) | Crossings  | Revenue   |
|   |   | 4 Wheel   | 2-Axle<br>With Trailer |                              |                 |            |   |
| A. Blue Water Bridge                        | Connects Port Huron, Michigan, USA to Point Edward, Ontario, Canada           | \$ 4.00   | \$ 12.00               | \$ 21.25                     | \$ 8.50         | 3,991,820  | \$ 26,424,642   |
| B. Mackinac Bridge                          | Connects Mackinaw City, Michigan to St. Ignace, Michigan                      | \$ 4.00   | \$ 4.00                | \$ 25.00                     | \$ 4.00         | 4,526,044  | \$ 24,004,545   |
| C. Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge    | Connects Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, USA to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada | \$ 4.40   | \$ 8.80                | \$ 30.00                     | \$ 12.00        | 1,109,831  | \$ 6,295,644  |
| D. Windsor-Gordie Howe International Bridge | Connects Windsor, Ontario, Canada to Detroit, Michigan, USA                   | Not available - anticipated opening fall 2025     |                        |                              |                 |            |   |
| E. Ambassador Bridge                        | Connects Detroit, Michigan, USA to Windsor, Ontario, Canada                   | \$ 9.00   | \$ 18.00               | \$ 70.00                     | \$ 9.00         | 6,226,578  | Not available, privately owned  |
| F. Aazhogan Bridge (International Falls)    | Connects International Falls, Minnesota, USA to Fort Frances, Ontario, Canada | \$ 9.00   | \$ 15.00               | \$ 22.00                     | \$ 13.00        | 307,789    | Not available   |
| G. Peace Bridge                             | Connects Buffalo, New York, USA to Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada                 | \$ 8.00   | \$ 12.00               | \$ 40.00                     | \$ 19.00        | 4,802,079  | \$ 29,543,000   |
| H. Lewiston-Queenston Bridge                | Connects Lewiston, New York, USA to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada      | \$ 6.00   | \$ 18.00               | \$ 34.00                     | \$ 16.00        | 3,120,799  | The Lewiston-Queenston, Rainbow, and Whirlpool Rapids Bridges had a combined revenue of \$25,731,781 in 2024. |
| I. Rainbow Bridge                           | Connects Niagara Falls, New York, USA to Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada       | \$ 6.00   | \$ 18.00               | \$ 34.00                     | \$ 16.00        | 2,234,214  |   |
| J. Whirlpool Rapids Bridge                  | Connects Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada                                       | \$ 6.00   | \$ 18.00               | \$ 34.00                     | \$ 16.00        | 434,337    |   |
| K. Seaway International Bridge              | Connects Massena, New York, USA to Cornwall, Ontario, Canada                  | \$ 3.75   | \$ 8.50                | \$ 17.75                     | \$ 3.75         | 2,582,419  | \$ 2,724,398 Canada   |
| L. Ogdensburg Bridge                        | Connects Ogdensburg, New York, USA to Johnstown, Ontario, Canada              | \$ 3.25   | \$ 6.75                | \$ 12.00                     | \$ 6.75         | 590,141    | \$ 2,486,177  |
| M. Thousand Islands Bridge                  | Connects Alexandria Bay, New York, USA to Gananoque, Ontario, Canada          | \$ 4.00   | \$ 9.00                | \$ 18.50                     | \$ 11.00        | 1,970,515  | Not available   |

Source: The OAG prepared this exhibit based on data queried from various sources on the Internet.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE  
Michigan Department of Transportation

BWB Views From the East and West  
Photographs Taken May 7, 2025



East View



West View

Source: The OAG took the BWB photographs.





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