# High Speed Rail Aff Addendum

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## HSR – General Solvency

#### HSR Works Empirics

Yoni Appelbaum is a social and cultural historian of the United States. He is a doctoral candidate at Brandeis University, and a lecturer in history at Babson College. “How High Speed Rail Could Revitalize the Northeast” Jul 13, 2012, <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2012/07/how-high-speed-rail-could-revitalize-northeast/2576/>

From New York's Pennsylvania Station, you can catch a northbound subway train toward the Bronx. Thirty-nine minutes later, it will pull into Pelham Parkway, a dozen miles away. But imagine, instead, that you could hop aboard a Next Generation High-Speed Rail train and in thirty-nine minutes pull up in Waterbury, Connecticut. The aging industrial town would be more swiftly accessible from midtown Manhattan than much of New York City. That's the alluring vision Amtrak unveiled on Monday morning. The national railroad passenger company imagines a high-speed network that, by 2040, would whisk travelers from New York south to Washington or north to Boston in just 94 minutes. It's the highlight of an ambitious, $151 billion plan to rework its northeast corridor to meet burgeoning demand. The price-tag alone makes the plan implausible. But for the beleaguered rail corporation, which Mitt Romney and Congressional Republicans have suggested privatizing, the vision amounts to an argument for its future relevance and unmet potential. The report touts many prospective benefits, including creating construction jobs, shortening travel times, boosting productivity, enhancing safety, and mitigating environmental impacts. These benefits are quite real, but urban economist Ed Glaeser has argued that they aren't remotely worth the price. He calculates relatively modest gains in productivity, safety, and the environment and points out that a construction project stretched over decades is an ineffective counter-cyclical stimulus. By shrinking the distance between vibrant urban cores and the smaller communities that lie between them, high-speed rail could spark an economic boom. Glaeser does, however, acknowledge one potential benefit large enough to tip the scales. Large economic impacts from high-speed rail, he writes, come "only if it significantly increases the speed at which an area with cheap real-estate gains access to a booming place that doesn't have any comparable, closer available land area." That describes, almost perfectly, the relationship of Connecticut's rusting industrial towns to the burgeoning prosperity of New York City. Travel today to Waterbury on the MetroNorth commuter railroad, and after one transfer, two hours, and fifteen minutes, the train will pull in to a desultory concrete platform, not quite large enough to accommodate two rail cars. Overhead looms the 240-foot clock tower of the old Union Station, still the tallest structure in Waterbury a century after it was built. It stands as a monument to Waterbury's great age of prosperity, which came rolling into town on rails of steel. The first railroad reached the small industrial town in 1849. "The importance of this event to the industries of Waterbury," one historian declared, "cannot be overstated." Within a few years, the borough had incorporated as a city. It grew explosively. By 1860, the city's half-dozen brass manufacturing firms were joined by fifty new joint-stock corporations. By 1900, fifty thousand people lived in Waterbury, and half its workers labored in its factories. It was the Brass City, and in the valley around it rose most of the nation's brass industry. The Naugatuck Valley, though, contained neither significant deposits of ore nor substantial numbers of consumers. Its rivers were not navigable, and its roads were unequal to the traffic. It took railroads to haul raw materials up the valley, and to fill their cars with buttons, pins, daguerreotypes, ammunition cases, hooks, clocks, and more than two hundred other articles made of brass for the return trip. The railroad turned the Naugatuck Valley into "one great factory city with a continuous freight-yard," stretching from Waterbury down to the Connecticut shore. The constant flow of raw materials in and finished products out soon made it the most profitable-per-mile in the nation. By the century's end, the city's various railroads had consolidated into the New York & New Haven, which doubled the track to accommodate the traffic. At the peak, eighty-six passenger trains arrived each day. In 1909, the railroad erected a palatial station, emphatically announcing the city's new prominence. Architectural Review declared it "most delicate and refined," and American Architect a "dignified treatment of a difficult subject." The city cooperated enthusiastically, condemning private buildings to make way for approach roads and ancillary facilities. And above it all loomed the Italianate tower, bearing an enormous clock, in tribute to one of the city's leading industries. But that tower marked the peak of the city's prosperity. The 1910 census declared it the 76th largest city in the nation. From there, it began a relative decline, sliding steadily down the list. It continued to grow through the middle of the twentieth century before its factories began to shut down and its population stagnated. Could rail lead to a revival in Waterbury? One promising model is Ciudad Real. The sleepy Spanish town, nestled midway between Madrid and Seville, boomed with the arrival of the high-speed AVE trains in 1992. Residents of the two larger cities, drawn by cheap housing, relocated to Ciudad Real, and the surging commuter traffic led to a tripling of rail service. Even better, businesses relocated to the city, lured by the combination of an attractive town, low rents, and easy access to big markets. Ciudad Real built a gleaming regional hospital, and its fledgling university developed a striking national reach. Waterbury has much of the same raw potential. The Brass City sits tarnished by age and neglect, but the charming business district and attractive housing erected during its heyday could easily be restored, and its abandoned factories re-purposed. In 2010, the census reported a median home value in the city of $156,600. That's not far below the national average, but roughly a third of the figure for the New York Metro area, and a fifth of the median in Manhattan. Nor has that gap gone unnoticed. Even without convenient transportation, the city has recently attracted a sizable community of ultra-orthodox Jews, lured north from New York by Waterbury's urban density and cheap housing. For Waterbury to thrive, though, it will need to be more than a commuter town. It needs an economy of its own. The tight connections to larger cities offered by high-speed rail would allow the city to attract and retain talented workers and students. Low costs and high quality of life may serve to foster start-ups, lure back-office operations, and pull in small businesses that cannot afford big-city rents. Waterbury already hosts a satellite campus for UConn, and its two hospitals, now merging, serve a regional population and are teaching affiliates of Yale's School of Medicine. The potential is there. All of this remains, at best, decades in the future. An official near Danbury, one stop down the line, scoffed to a reporter that the Amtrak plan is "a pie-in-the-sky idea," pointing out that much of the rail corridor would have to be constructed from scratch. That's true. But if it were, a train could reach Danbury from New York in less than half an hour, cutting the present commute by 75%. To the east, Hartford sits midway along the proposed line, just 47 minutes from either Boston or New York. The uncertain economic benefits of Amtrak's plan certainly need to be weighed against its inevitable costs. Critics like Ed Glaeser may be right that, even in aggregate, the gains Amtrak enumerates fail to justify the huge expense. But that is, at least in part, because it has left the biggest potential benefits entirely unmentioned. By shrinking the distance between vibrant urban cores and the smaller communities that lie between them, high-speed rail could spark an economic boom, transforming the cities it touches. In the nineteenth century, railroads conferred a key advantage on cities competing for economic growth. In the twenty-first century, they may play that role yet again.

#### HSR leads to a laundry list of benefits

Clean Technica**.** “High-Speed Rail Investment in U.S. Would Result in $26.4 Billion Net Benefits by 2040” <http://cleantechnica.com/2012/07/17/high-speed-rail-investment-in-u-s-would-result-in-26-4-billion-net-benefits-by-2040/2/> July 17, 2012

Washington, D.C. – While critics of implementing a high-speed rail program in America say the U.S. cannot afford to build it, new information released today shows that the net benefits to investment far exceed the cost. The report titled “Opportunity Cost of Inaction: High-Speed Rail and High Performance Passenger Rail Service” was released [last week] at a Congressional briefing by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). It shows that building a high-speed rail program in the U.S. results in $26.4 billion in net benefits over the next 40 years. According to the report, the U.S. Census estimates the population will grow by more than 100 million people in the next 40 years. As the population grows, increased pressure will be placed on the nation’s already crumbling infrastructure. With a complementary high-speed rail service, this will help mitigate the cost of maintenance, replacement and the capacity expansion needs of airport runways, highways and roadways. In many cases expansion will be difficult because of the lack of land mass. “As we look at the implementation of high-speed rail in America, we must recognize the value it brings to help sustain and complement our other modes of transportation,” said APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy. “It is critical that policy makers take a leadership role in moving high-speed rail forward to capture the billions of dollars of economic, mobility, energy and environmental benefits.” The report shows investment in high-speed and high performance passenger rail not only aids in solving our capacity issues, but helps mitigate overall transportation costs and helps our roadways and airports work more efficiently. The strain on our transportation system by travelers will result in increased congestion and delays which will lead to billions of dollars lost in lost opportunities in a globally competitive market. “By building high-speed rail, we not only offer mobility benefits to those who ride the rails, but to those who continue to fly or drive by helping to alleviate the strain on our overburdened network,” said Melaniphy. There are substantial net benefits to regions if we invest in high-speed rail. The net benefit to investing in the California region is $8.2 billion over 40 years. The Midwest is $11.7 billion, the Northwest Corridor is $5.5 billion and the Pacific Northwest is $1.1 billion. Additional factors in determining the net benefits include economic output generated, tax revenue generated, emissions savings and others. Numerous additional social and mobility benefits are not quantified in the report. “This study quantifies just the tip of the iceberg and is a very conservative estimate of the net benefits resulting from implementing high performance trains in America,” said Melaniphy. “We must recognize the positive growth potential and benefits high-speed rail can provide to our citizens.” In addition to APTA releasing the report to Congress, railway representatives from eight countries were on Capitol Hill today to brief members of Congress on the high-speed rail industry worldwide. These leaders were in Washington as part of the UIC 8th World Congress on High-Speed Rail, which begins the following day in Philadelphia.

#### Transportation via HSR is efficient

PETRA TODOROVICH ,DANIEL SCHNED And ROBERT LANE Petra Todorovich is director of America 2050, a national urban planning initiative to develop an infrastructure and growth. Daniel Schned is an associate planner for America 2050 at Regional Plan Association, where he has focused on researching and planning for dedicated high-speed rail. Robert Lane is senior fellow for urban design at Regional Plan Association and a founding principal of Plan & Process LLP. His current and recent work focuses on the relationships between transit, land use, and urban design strategy for the United States “High-Speed Rail International Lessons for U.S. Policy Makers” Pg 15-16 2011, <https://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/dl/1948_1268_High-Speed%20Rail%20PFR_Webster.pdf>

Nearly a half-century of international experience with highspeed rail has proven that it is capable of producing a wide range of transportation, economic, and environmental beneﬁts. Every potential high-speed rail corridor requires unique considerations and treatments, based on the characteristics of the megaregion it serves and the metropolitan regional planning context of each station along the route. This chapter outlines the range of beneﬁts that high-speed rail can offer, and suggests

how to maximize them.High-speed rail is ﬁrst and foremost a transportation improvement that provides a framework for other secondary beneﬁts. Shorter travel times: High-speed rail can create travel time savings for those who would have used a different mode of transportation between urban centers. It improves overall access to many destinations in the megaregion and brings those places closer together, a phenomenon referred to as the “shrinking continent” (Spiekermann and Wegener 1994).Mode shift: Where it is competitive with other intercity transportation modes, high-speed rail can capture a large share of passenger volume. International experience suggests that high-speed rail usually captures 80 percent of air or rail trips, if the travel time by high-speed train is less than two and a half hours (UIC 2010a). Mode shift to rail provides the greatest beneﬁt in regions where road and air capacity is constrained. Safety: High-speed rail systems around the world have experienced excellent safety records. Until a deadly accident in China in July 2011, high-speed rail operations on dedicated tracks had never experienced a single injury or fatality (UIC 2010b). If high-speed rail is built in the United States and meets historic safety standards, one result could be fewer transport-related deaths as more passengers choose rail for intercity travel. Reliability: Dedicated high-speed rail services usually operate at greater frequencies than conventional rail, and have fewer delays and better on-time performance than cars and airplanes. The average delay of a Shinkansen train on the Tokaido line is only 30 seconds (JR Central 2011b). Spain’s AVE provides a full refund to passengers if their train is more than ﬁve minutes late (RENFE 2011).Capacity: By adding capacity to the railway network, high-speed rail can divert a large share of passenger rail service to new, dedicated tracks, thus freeing up capacity on the conventional rail network for freight and other intercity and com- muter rail services. For example, the United Kingdom has chosen to address capacity constraints on its West Coast Main Line with the implementation of the proposed High Speed 2 (HS2) line. In Japan, the main motivation for implementing the Tokaido line between Tokyo and Osak was to provide additional capacity to the transportation network, rather than to reduce travel times (Givoni 2006). Efﬁcient land use: A typical highspeed rail line has the ability to transport approximately the same number of people in the same direction as a three-lane highway, but on a fraction of the land area. The right-of-way width of a typical two-track high-speed rail line is about 82 feet—onethird the width of a standard six-lane highway (246 feet). This difference in land use amounts to a savings of 24.3 acres per mile of high-speed rail. Such a savings could be particularly signiﬁcant in environmentally sensitive areas that need protection and in urbanized areas where land for highway expansion is costly to acquire (UIC 2010a).

#### **HSR built in segments**

Progressive Railroading “U.S. high-speed rail likely to be built incrementally, consultants say at 8th world congress” July 2012 http://www.progressiverailroading.com/high\_speed\_rail/article/US-highspeed-rail-likely-to-be-built-incrementally-consultants-say-at-8th-world-congress--31708#

Funding for U.S. high-speed rail projects has all but dried up, states that not long ago thought their projects were on the fast track for completion have scaled back plans and the excitement that once surrounded the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail program has dimmed. So, now what? That was a recurring question during the 8th World Congress on High-Speed Rail, held July 10-13 at Philadelphia’s Pennsylvania Convention Center. Perhaps the most realistic answer was offered the afternoon of July 11 during a presentation entitled, “Building U.S. HSR Incrementally.” Sharon Greene, principal with transportation consulting firm Sharon Greene & Associates, and Sasha Page, vice president of infrastructure consulting firm Infrastructure Management Group, addressed the “now what?” questions with their discussion on how the United States needs to refocus its high-speed plans. The also provided examples of projects that could help advance high- and higher-speed rail in an incremental fashion. “We went from very active systems planning back to incrementalism,” said Greene. “It’s not that we’ve given up on systems planning, but we’re taking a more realistic approach.” The approach includes refocusing on U.S. high-speed rail development policy, taking into consideration the current political environment and lack of funding. It’ll also be important to integrate higher-speed services with existing services, and prioritize “foundation” projects (such as the Gateway project in the Northeast and Transbay Terminal in California) and the role they play, Greene said. “These projects have taken on an added significance,” she said. “They not only help provide blended service, but these are projects that can give us benefits sooner, significantly improve mobility and build the political support needed to stimulate funding approvals.” Adding new intercity passenger-rail corridors, and not necessarily high-speed ones, would support the incremental approach, as well, Page said. For example, Texas is considering new passenger-rail lines along the Cotton Belt corridor in the Dallas-Fort Worth region, as well as between Austin and San Antonio, and Dallas and Houston. “Getting an alignment available that would go through these cities could be a key foundation for a San Antonio-Austin-Dallas high-speed rail segment,” Page said. “This is one example of a project — and they’re all throughout the U.S. — that are not part of a high-speed rail program, but could become the foundation for one.” And just as high-speed rail development in the United States likely will be done incrementally, financing for it will be, too. “There is not going to be one, big program from the federal government — there never was initially, but the hope was that the federal government would have a substantial program,” said Page. Funding at the state and local levels will be piecemeal, as well, and private funding — aside from what’s being offered for the southern California-to-Las Vegas DesertXpress and Orlando-to-Miami All Aboard Florida projects — will be scarce, Page believes.

#### **Plan doesn’t destroy environment**

PETRA TODOROVICH ,DANIEL SCHNED And ROBERT LANE Petra Todorovich is director of America 2050, a national urban planning initiative to develop an infrastructure and growth. Daniel Schned is an associate planner for America 2050 at Regional Plan Association, where he has focused on researching and planning for dedicated high-speed rail. Robert Lane is senior fellow for urban design at Regional Plan Association and a founding principal of Plan & Process LLP. His current and recent work focuses on the relationships between transit, land use, and urban design strategy for the United States “High-Speed Rail International Lessons for U.S. Policy Makers” Page 19-20 2011, <https://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/dl/1948_1268_High-Speed%20Rail%20PFR_Webster.pdf>

High-speed rail has the potential to provide greater environmental beneﬁts and energy efﬁciencies than other modes of long distance travel. However, several conditions must be met to obtain these beneﬁts. Energy efﬁciency and ridership: High-speed rail offers greater operating efﬁciency on a per passenger mile basis than competing modes, such as single-occupancy automobiles or airplanes that require signiﬁcant amounts of fuel to get off the ground. For example, Shinkansen trains are estimated to use one-quarter the energy of airplanes and one-sixth that of private automobiles per passenger mile (JR Central 2011a). To achieve environmental beneﬁts, highspeed trains must maximize load factors to realize the greatest efﬁciencies. As highspeed rail ridership increases, so does its relative energy efﬁciency, whereas a high-speed train carrying no passengers ceases to be efﬁcient in any sense. In regions where the number of total trips is not growing, high-speed rail can bring about a net reduction of energy use through mode shift by capturing passengers from automobile or airplane trips. In regions like California where population and trips are projected to keep growing, highspeed rail can help reduce the energy and climate impacts on a per passenger basis through a combination of mode shift and attracting new passengers to high-speed rail. Energy mix: High-speed rail is the only available mode of long-distance travel that currently is not dependent on motor fuels. High-speed rail is powered by electricity, which is not without environmental problems depending on its source (see table 2). If t is powered by electricity generated from fossil fuels, such as coal or natural gas that discharge harmful greenhouse gas emissions, then its environmental beneﬁts are limited. However, electricity is generally considered an improvement over petroleum generated power and provides a crucial advantage as the United States aims to reduce its dependence on foreign oil. Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor and parts of the Keystone Corridor (connecting Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to Philadelphia) are electriﬁed. Most other conventional passenger trains in America operate on freight rail lines and are powered by diesel fuel. Energy planning needs to be a part of the planning for high-speed rail to ensure the reduction of greenhouse gases and other harmful pollutants. Even with the current energy mix that includes fossil fuel sources, however, high-speed rail can yield signiﬁcant environmental beneﬁts. A recent study by the University of Pennsylvania (2011) found that a new high-speed line in the Northeast Corridor, powered by electricity from the current energy mix, would divert nearly 30 million riders from cars and planes, attract 6 million new riders, and still reduce car emissions of carbon monoxide by more than 3 million tons annually. The system would also result in a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions if the energy mix were shifted to low carbon emitting sources. Nuclear power is a signiﬁcant source of electricity for passenger rail in countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, and Spain. France is by far the largest nuclear power user, with a share of more than 85 percent for railway operations. However, growing concerns about nuclear power following the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi plant accident in Japan raise doubts about its role in the development of a U.S. high-speed rail system in the near future. Spain’s rail network uses renewable energy sources for 18.4 percent of ts electricity (IFEU 2008). Japan’s high-speed rail uses geothermal and hydro power to meet up to 56 percent of its energy needs (Tan 2011).

## HSR – Econ Solvency

#### Plan delivers major economic growth

US High Speed Rail Association “High speed rail delivers many layers of economic benefit” <http://www.ushsr.com/benefits/economic.html> (2012)

High speed rail delivers fast, efficient transportation so riders can save time, energy, and money. HSR is extremely reliable and operates in all weather conditions. HSR is not subject to congestion, so it operates on schedule every day without delay - especially during rush hour and peak travel times. HSR spurs the revitalization of cities by encouraging high density, mixed-use real estate development around the stations. HSR also fosters economic development in second-tier cities along train routes. HSR links cities together into integrated regions that can then function as a single stronger economy. HSR broadens labor markets and offers workers a wider network of employers to choose from. HSR encourages and enables the development of technology clusters with fast easy access between locations. HSR also expands visitor markets and tourism while increasing visitor spending. The many benefits HSR delivers spread throughout regions that have HSR, encouraging economic development across a large area.

#### **HSR leads to significant economic growth**

PETRA TODOROVICH ,DANIEL SCHNED And ROBERT LANE Petra Todorovich is director of America 2050, a national urban planning initiative to develop an infrastructure and growth. Daniel Schned is an associate planner for America 2050 at Regional Plan Association, where he has focused on researching and planning for dedicated high-speed rail. Robert Lane is senior fellow for urban design at Regional Plan Association and a founding principal of Plan & Process LLP. His current and recent work focuses on the relationships between transit, land use, and urban design strategy for the United States “High-Speed Rail International Lessons for U.S. Policy Makers” Page 16-17 2011, <https://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/dl/1948_1268_High-Speed%20Rail%20PFR_Webster.pdf>

High-speed rail’s ability to promote economic growth is grounded in its capacity to increase access to markets and exert positive effects on the spatial distribution of economic activity (Redding and Sturm 2008). Transportation networks increase market access, and economic development is more likely to occur in places with more and better transportation infrastructure. In theory, by improving access to urban markets, highspeed rail increases employment, wages, and productivity; encourages agglomeration; and boosts regional and local economies. Empirical evidence of high-speed rail’s impact around the world tends to support the following theoretical arguments for high-speed rail’s economic beneﬁts. Higher wages and productivity: The time savings and increased mobility offered by high-speed rail enables workers in the service sector and in information- exchange industries to move about the megaregion more freely and reduces the costs of face-to-face communication. This enhanced connectivity boosts worker productivity and business competitiveness, leading to higher wages (Greengauge 21 2010).Deeper labor and employment markets: By connecting more communities to other population and job centers, highspeed rail expands the overall commuter shed of the megaregion. The deepened labor markets give employers access to larger pools of skilled workers, employees access to more employment options, and workers access to more and cheaper housing options outside of expensive city centers (Stolarick, Swain, and Adleraim 2010).Expanded tourism and visitor spending: Just as airports bring visitors and their spending power into the local economy, high-speed rail stations attract new tourists and business travelers who might not have made the trip otherwise. A study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors (2010) concluded that building high-speed rail would increase visitor spending annually by roughly $225 million in the Orlando region, $360 million in metropolitan Los Angeles, $50 million in the Chicago area, and $100 million in Greater Albany, New York. Direct job creation: High-speed rail creates thousands of construction-related jobs in design, engineering, planning, and construction, as well as jobs in ongoing maintenance and operations. In Spain, the expansion of the high-speed AVE system from Malaga to Seville is predicted to create 30,000 construction jobs (Euro Weekly 2010). In China, over 100,000 construction workers were involved in building the high-speed rail line that connects Beijing and Shanghai (Bradsher 2010). Sustained investment could foster the development of new manufacturing industries for rail cars and other equipment, and generate large amounts of related employment. Urban regeneration and station area development: High-speed rail can generate growth in real estate markets and anchor investment in commercial and residential developments around train stations, especially when they are built in coordination with a broader set of public interventions and urban design strategies (see chapter 3). These interventions ensure that high-speed rail is integrated into the urban and regional fabric, which in turn ensures the highest level of ridership and economic activity. For example, the city of Lille, France, experienced greater than average growth and substantial ofﬁce and hotel development after its high-speed rail station was built at the crossroads of lines linking London, Paris, and Brussels (Nuworsoo and Deakin 2009). Spatial agglomeration: High-speed rail enhances agglomeration economies by creating greater proximity between business locations through shrinking time distances, especially when the locations are within the rail-friendly 100 to 600 mile range. Agglomeration economies occur when ﬁrms beneﬁt from locating close to other complementary ﬁrms and make use of the accessibility to varied activities and pools of skilled labor

### US will lose economic competitiveness if it doesn’t invest in HSR

Jeff **Siegel**, journalist and clean tech analyst for Green chip stocks, December 29th, **2009**, “China High Speed Rail ups the Ante”, Green chip stocks, <http://www.greenchipstocks.com/articles/china-high-speed-rail/611>

In an effort to expand its high-speed rail network (eventually linking Guangzhou with Beijing), China has delivered what looks to be the fastest rail link in the world. Traveling at an average speed of 217 miles an hour, the Chinese have once again upped the ante when it comes to cleaner and more efficient transportation alternatives. In fact, China now expects to build 42 high-speed rail lines by 2012. Will they pull off such a lofty goal in such a short amount of time? Hard to say. But I certainly wouldn't bet against them at this point. As for high-speed rail hopes in the US? Well, we know the benefits. According to the US Department of Transportation, high-speed rail consumes nearly 10 times less fuel than cars and six times less than planes. And the Bureau of Transportation Statistics has indicated that while passenger air travel in the US gets about 45 passenger-miles per gallon of fuel - high-speed rail systems in Japan and Europe deliver efficiency equivalents of about 300 to 500 passenger miles per gallon. We also know that in Europe, high-speed trains have taken about 50 percent of the traffic where rail trips times are 4.5 hours or less. And on routes where high-speed train times are 2 hours or less, it gets about 90 percent over air transportation. There's plenty of data that supports the economic, social and national security benefits of high-speed rail. But despite the Obama administration announcing a new vision for high-speed rail (with a few billion in tow), we continue the debate - pushing us further and further behind the rest of the modern world. Of course, that doesn't mean we won't ever make any headway on high-speed rail. But for now, if you're looking to invest in high-speed rail opportunities - you would be wise to focus primarily on the companies that are developing these systems in China and in other parts of the world.

## HSR – Energy Security Solvency

#### **HSR Solves Energy Security**

US High Speed Rail Association “A national high speed rail system ends our oil dependency quickly & permanently” (2012) http://www.ushsr.com/benefits/energysecurity.html

Building an electrically-powered national high speed rail network across America is the single most powerful thing we can do to get the nation off oil and into a secure, sustainable form of mobility. A national network of high speed trains can be powered by a combination of renewable energy sources including wind, solar, geothermal, and ocean/tidal energy. America's dependency on oil is the most severe in the world, and inevitably pulls us into costly resource wars. It also pushes us into exploring for oil in extreme locations such as 10,000 feet deep below the Gulf of Mexico. We use 25% of the entire world's oil supply, yet we only have 5% of the world's population. We use 8-10 times more oil per person per day than Europeans, and they have faster, easier and better mobility than we do. The extremely high daily oil consumption of Americans is not due to a higher standard of living, but because of the extremely inefficient nature of our national transportation system – based on individual vehicles powered by internal combustion engines, combined with our sprawling community designs that force people into cars for every trip. As the world oil supply begins to peak and then irreversibly declines, prices will rise faster, and the situation will get far worse for America if we don't quickly reduce our national oil dependency. This dependency cuts across our entire society and affects our daily survival. Oil provides 95% of the energy to grow, process and deliver food to the nation. Our entire national transportation system is powered mostly by oil. Numerous daily products we use are made from oil. We use 20 million barrels of oil every day - just in America - 70% of it for transportation. Of the 20 million barrels we consume, we import 2/3 of this oil (13 million barrels per day) from foreign sources, many in unstable places. No combination of drilling off our coasts, hydrogen fuel cells, natural gas, biofuels, and used french fry oil will solve this and carry 300 million Americans into the future. None of these fuels can be scaled up to anywhere near the amount of liquid fuel we use daily in any practical, economical, or sustainable way.

### **HSR Solves for America’s severe dependence on foreign oil and helps the environment**

USHSR (US High Speed Rail Association), foremost source on HSR implementation in the US, No Date, “A national high speed rail system ends our oil dependency quickly and permanently”, USHSR, <http://www.ushsr.com/benefits/energysecurity.html>

Building an electrically-powered national high speed rail network across America is the single most powerful thing we can do to get the nation off oil and into a secure, sustainable form of mobility. A national network of high speed trains can be powered by a combination of renewable energy sources including wind, solar, geothermal, and ocean/tidal energy. America's dependency on oil is the most severe in the world, and inevitably pulls us into costly resource wars. It also pushes us into exploring for oil in extreme locations such as 10,000 feet deep below the Gulf of Mexico. We use 25% of the entire world's oil supply, yet we only have 5% of the world's population. We use 8-10 times more oil per person per day than Europeans, and they have faster, easier and better mobility than we do. The extremely high daily oil consumption of Americans is not due to a higher standard of living, but because of the extremely inefficient nature of our national transportation system – based on individual vehicles powered by internal combustion engines, combined with our sprawling community designs that force people into cars for every trip. As the world oil supply begins to peak and then irreversibly declines, prices will rise faster, and the situation will get far worse for America if we don't quickly reduce our national oil dependency. This dependency cuts across our entire society and affects our daily survival. Oil provides 95% of the energy to grow, process and deliver food to the nation. Our entire national transportation system is powered mostly by oil. Numerous daily products we use are made from oil. We use 20 million barrels of oil every day - just in America - 70% of it for transportation. Of the 20 million barrels we consume, we import 2/3 of this oil (13 million barrels per day) from foreign sources, many in unstable places. No combination of drilling off our coasts, hydrogen fuel cells, natural gas, biofuels, and used french fry oil will solve this and carry 300 million Americans into the future. None of these fuels can be scaled up to anywhere near the amount of liquid fuel we use daily in any practical, economical, or sustainable way.

### HSR reduces dependence on unstable foreign oil and has numerous environmental benefits

AHSRA (American High Speed Rail Alliance), non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to the development of HSR and investment in clean tech in the United States, 2009, “High Speed Rail Environmental Benefits”, AHSRA, <http://eunicecorbin.com/sample/advocacy/environment.html>

High speed rail development promises tremendous environmental benefits and bolsters U.S. energy security. High speed rail development in the U.S. would reduce carbon in the atmosphere, help control congestion on the roads, lower consumption of energy and help reduce America’s dependence on foreign oil. Automobile transportation currently impacts the environment in a big way. Transportation sources account for nearly a third of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and it is the fastest-growing source. Transportation is also the largest end-use source of CO2, which is the most prevalent greenhouse gas. Automobile trips account for 90 percent of U.S. intercity trips; air travel accounts for 7 percent. If passengers were to cancel their automobile and airplane trips in favor of high speed rail, it would save 6 billion pounds of C02 per year, according to the Center for Clean Air Policy and the Center for Neighborhood Technology in a report funded by the U.S. EPA. High speed rail development will help ease congestion by incentivizing drivers to come off the roads. Due to the increased congestion in the cities and on major highways, 4.2 billion hours of extra time is spent on the road, wasting 2.8 billions of additional fuel and costing up to $87.2 billion, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. By lowering transportation fuel consumption, high speed rail development would lead to increased energy conservation in America. The U.S. consumes 25 percent of the world’s oil, yet it is only 5 percent of the world’s population and has less than 3 percent of the world’s oil reserves, according to the Natural Resource Defense Council. Of the oil that is consumed, 70 percent of it goes towards transportation, according to the National Commission on Energy Policy. The American Security Project calculates that 68 percent of U.S. petroleum comes from countries with “high” or “very high” risk of political instability. High speed rail development would decrease the need for foreign oil, allowing the country to be more energy-independent. The American High Speed Rail Alliance believes high speed rail must be part of the clean energy solution to reduce America’s dependence on fossil fuel and reduce green house gas emissions.

## HSR – US Key

#### Government Funding for HSR

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High-speed rail in Europe has been funded and ﬁnanced by a variety of sources, including national governments and EU structural funds. The European Investment Bank (EIB) provides subsidized loans with favorable interest rates and long repayment periods, as well as loan guarantees and direct recruitment of private lenders. While the United States currently does not have an equivalent to the EIB, President Obama has proposed a national infrastructure bank that could play a similar role in providing loans, grants, and credit assistance for transportation projects at a regional or national scale. The president also proposed capitalizing the bank with $30 billion in the FY 2012 federal budget (White House 2011). Some states already have their own state infrastructure banks, which operate on a system of revolving direct loans to increase the overall number of projects that can be built with limited federal transportation funds (Ohio Department of Transportation 2011; Wisconsin Department of Transportation 2011). A national infrastructure bank, and to a lesser degree the state banks, could provide crucial funding and ﬁnancing assistance for the large upfront costs, while encouraging collaboration among the state, local, and private investors involved in the construction of high-speed rail lines. Two existing federal loan programs for transportation also could be expanded for high-speed rail ﬁnancing. The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) provides long-term loans and credit assistance through the U.S. Department of Transportation to ﬁnance large infrastructure projects with dedicated revenue sources that allow repayment. The program is designed to leverage private co-investment, and can cover up to 33 percent of the project costs (U.S. DOT 2011b). TIFIA could encourage even greater private investment if the program were enhanced to increase the maximum funding allowed to reﬂect current demand; permit more ﬂexibility in the project costs that can receive funding; and offer a simpliﬁed application and review process (Yarema 2011). These enhancements would be beneﬁcial for funding high-speed rail since the costs are large and lead times are already long, even before the time for required review processes is added. The Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program provides direct federal loans and loan guarantees to ﬁnance the development of railroad infrastructure. It is beneﬁcial for high-speed rail because it can supply direct loans for up to 100 percent of project costs, with repayment periods up to 35 years and low interest rates locked in for the life of the loan term.

### **Federal Funding Needed for HSR**

Angela Greiling Keane Angela Greiling Keane is a reporter for Bloomberg News “Amtrak Relying On U.S. Funding To Attract Bullet-Train Investors” **July 11,** 2012http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-12/amtrak-relying-on-u-s-funding-to-attract-bullet-train-investors.html

 Amtrak, the U.S. long-distance passenger railroad, is turning its sights from private investors toward governments to fund the beginning of a $151 billion plan for bullet trains between Northeast cities by 2040. The Washington-based, taxpayer-supported railroad will need “significant” government support to carry out its plan to boost train capacity and increase speeds to 220 miles (354 kilometers) per hour between Washington and Boston, Amtrak Chief Executive Officer Joseph Boardman said in an interview. “We knew it was going to take a significant effort on the part of government at some level or all levels,” Boardman said yesterday. “We know for sure that needs to come sooner than a public-private partnership that’s often talked about.” Amtrak is trying to upgrade its infrastructure, some a century old, on its busiest corridor and establish the first U.S. rail service to be considered “high-speed” by international standards. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica, of Florida, has been among Republicans critical of public funding for high-speed rail, saying investors and companies could develop it more quickly and for less money. “The chairman believes the private sector could do these types of projects much more effectively than the federal government,” Justin Harclerode, a spokesman for Mica, said. Amtrak last year invited proposals by investors and hired KPMG LLP to help develop a business and financial plan to identify funding sources. Lowering Expectations Tamping down expectations for private-sector funding is prudent at this point, said Mortimer Downey, a former U.S. deputy transportation secretary who’s now a senior adviser at Parsons Brinckerhoff Inc., an infrastructure consulting firm based in New York. “You don’t put a $150 billion plan out there and expect instant funding,” he said in an interview. “There’s no free money. The private sector isn’t coming and giving you a grant. They are going to invest their dollars if they think there’s a return.” A $151 billion plan Amtrak released July 9 merges two previous blueprints that proposed spending $118 billion over 25 years for a new high-speed corridor and $52 billion over 20 years to improve existing Northeast services, said Stephen Gardner, Amtrak vice president of Northeast Corridor infrastructure and investment development. Money Maker The corridor is the only place Amtrak, which loses more than $1 billion a year, gets enough revenue to cover its operating costs. Northeast ridership may grow to 43.5 million people annually with ticket revenue of $4.86 billion by 2040, Amtrak said in the July 9 plan. That would be roughly four times last year’s ridership of 10.9 million and about five times the ticket revenue of $983.5 million. Amtrak’s fastest train, the Acela, takes six hours to travel between Washington and Boston. Slower regional trains that make more stops also operate on the route. The other place in the U.S. where high-speed rail is proposed is California, where the Senate and Assembly last week approved spending $4.75 billion from bonds to begin constructing a $68 billion route to link San Francisco and Los Angeles. Those moves allowed the state to claim $3.3 billion in promised U.S. funds, out of $8 billion for high-speed rail from President Barack Obama’s 2009 economic stimulus package. U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood traveled to Sacramento in May to nudge the California government along. The project would make California, the most indebted U.S. state, the only state working on a bullet train after Congress cut off 2012 funds for such projects. California Rail the first phase of the route will be a 130-mile stretch of rail down California’s Central Valley, not connecting with Los Angeles or San Francisco. In 2008, 53 percent of California voters approved issuing bonds for the rail project. LaHood, speaking to reporters from a high-speed rail conference in Philadelphia yesterday, called California’s move “historic” and praised public investment in a rail project. “The political will lies in California,” he said. “We hope our friends in Congress will take their cues from what we’ve seen come from California.” The U.S. Transportation Department will decide “soon” whether to help fund a privately owned high-speed rail project linking southern California tourists and gamblers with Las Vegas, LaHood said. Developers of the 190-mile Xpress West, formerly known as Desert Xpress, have asked the U.S. to provide loans to cover most of its estimated cost of as much as $6.5 billion. Investors in the project, which is backed by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, include Las Vegas casino developer Tony Marnell, a Reid contributor. “We’re evaluating their proposal, and we’ll be making some judgments about that very soon,” LaHood said. “We have worked with them on what we believe the costs will be and how those costs will be borne and who will pay for them. We’re working our way through their proposal and evaluating that and will be making some announcements about that soon.”

## Obama Will Do/Supports Stuff

#### **Obama Supports tax reform**

Jeanne, Sahadi, Jeanne Sahadi is a senior writer at CNNMoney.com, where she currently covers issues related to taxes, Sahadi holds a B.A. from Haverford College in Haverford, Pa. “Obama tax plan would hit the rich” March 22, 2012. http://money.cnn.com/2012/03/21/pf/taxes/obama-tax-plan/index.htm

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Wealthy taxpayers would see a big jump in their tax bills under President Obama's latest budget proposal, according to a new independent analysis. In fact, those in the top 1% of income would see an average tax increase of nearly $109,000 in 2015, according to the Tax Policy Center. The increase is relative to what people would pay if lawmakers chose to extend a number of policies, such as the Bush-era tax cuts, that are otherwise set to expire) In the Tax Policy Center's analysis, the top 1% are those with cash income of at least $630,000. That number counts paychecks, investment income and other less obvious sources of money such as the subsidy employers pay for their workers' health insurance. Overall, an estimated 16% of households would end up with lower tax bills under Obama's proposal, which was laid out last month in the president's 2013 budget. And about 33% of households would face a higher tax bill, but for many of them, the increases would likely be small, Roberton Williams, a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center, wrote Wednesday in a blog post. For instance, nearly 63% of tax filers with incomes between $100,000 and $200,000 would see a larger tax burden, but the average increase would be less than $500, according to the center. But those making $200,000 to $500,000 -- of whom 73% would get a tax hike -- would pay $4,942 more on average. The increased tax bills for the rich are driven by three Obama proposals. He is calling for the top two income tax rates -- currently 33% and 35% -- to rise to 36% and 39.6%. He would raise the tax rate on capital gains and dividends for high-income households to 20% from 15% today. And he would limit the value of their itemized deductions. The increased burden on high-income taxpayers under Obama's budget stands in contrast to the tax plans of his potential Republican rivals in the presidential election. Their proposals would end up cutting taxes for most households, but the biggest breaks would go to the top 1%. The same is true in terms of overall federal revenue. Over the next decade the president's budget would raise about $2.1 trillion more than would be the case if Congress just extended today's tax policies, the center estimates. Under Mitt Romney's tax plan, the federal government would lose $3.4 trillion. That's in large part because Romney has not yet specified how he would pay for his proposed 20% reduction in tax rates across the board.

#### Obama Supports Climate Legislation

Darren Samuelsohn is a senior energy & environment reporter for POLITICO Pro. He spent nearly a decade dominating the beat for E&E Publishing's Greenwire and Environment & Energy Daily “Climate bill needed to 'save our planet,' says Obama”. Feb 29, 2009 <http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2009/02/25/25climatewire-emissions-bill-needed-to-save-our-planet--oba-9849.html?pagewanted=all> E.P.

President Obama lent his voice last night to the push for a mandatory cap on greenhouse gas emissions, using his first speech to a joint session of Congress to lobby for controversial legislation sure to spark a heated debate during tight economic times. Obama campaigned for president last year with climate change and energy issues atop his agenda. And he returned to those themes yesterday, saying that a cap-and-trade bill would help spark economic recovery by giving U.S. companies greater incentive to start producing more wind turbines, solar panels, biofuels and battery-powered automobiles. "To truly transform our economy, to protect our security, and save our planet from the ravages of climate change, we need to ultimately make clean, renewable energy the profitable kind of energy," Obama said in his address to Congress. "So I ask this Congress to send me legislation that places a market-based cap on carbon pollution and drives the production of more renewable energy in America. That's what we need." In his next breath, the president teased a key climate-related component in his upcoming budget proposal to Congress. "To support that innovation, we will invest $15 billion a year to develop technologies like wind power and solar power, advanced biofuels, clean coal, and more efficient cars and trucks built right here in America," Obama said, referring to a budget plan that would assume government revenue from the allowances sold to companies for compliance with the cap-and-trade system. Obama also appealed to lawmakers by acknowledging the difficulties associated with voting on a climate plan that is sure to carry a large price tag. "None of this will come without cost, nor will it be easy," the president said. "But this is America. We don't do what's easy. We do what's necessary to move this country forward. "Nearly all House and Senate Democrats gave Obama a standing ovation for his climate change comments, with Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) even turning behind him to give a high five to Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.). A small group of moderate Senate Republicans also rose at Obama's mention of cap-and-trade legislation, including Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Mel Martinez of Florida, and John McCain of Arizona. Obama's global warming comments lacked many of the specifics that will surely be at the center of the Capitol Hill debate set to unfold over the next several months. The president also stayed well clear of the looming question of whether to combine energy and climate change bills into one big package or splinter them into separate pieces. Instead, Obama stuck to general themes, lumping energy in with health care and education as "the three areas that are absolutely critical to our economic future." Advocates of cap-and-trade legislation welcomed the president's remarks and pledged in varying degrees that they would soon deliver a major climate bill for his signature. "President Obama asked Congress for legislation that places a market-based cap on carbon pollution and we intend to give it to him," said Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), the chairman of the House Energy and Environment Subcommittee, which will be the point of origin for the legislation. "It is extremely helpful," Boxer added. "He has asked Congress to come forward, so we are very ready and my committee is very ready to do that." Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) predicted Obama was only getting started in his appeals for support on climate change. "When he used the term the 'ravages of climate change' he is clearly talking passionately about this issue," Udall said. "He clearly believes in this issue and I think we are going to see him push in a big way, in a bold way, to get something done." Leaders on both sides of Capitol Hill have sent signals they too are ready to meet Obama's request. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said earlier this week that he wants to hold a floor debate on a bipartisan climate bill by the end of the summer, specifically singling out McCain as a Republican who he is looking to for support. In the House, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has also pledged a first-ever climate vote this year on cap-and-trade legislation that Energy and Commerce Chairman Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) expects to mark up before Memorial Day (E&E Daily, Feb. 9). But Republican leaders, as well as several rank-and-file members, suggested last night that they have no plans to line up behind Obama's climate agenda. "We need to lead the country on the basis of a sound economic energy policy," said House Minority Whip Eric Cantor (R-Va.). "We cannot exist by thinking we can tax our way into the future. You may very well close out the manufacturing sector to this economy if we're not careful. We've got to strike the right balance in terms of energy and environmental policy." 'Cap and trade won't work' As the climate debate proceeds, Obama's biggest challenge may be winning over lawmakers who represent districts and states with large industrial bases. "I think that is going to fall largely along regional lines, rather than along party lines," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said last night, adding, "I personally am not going to be supporting a cap-and-trade proposal." Indeed, several Democrats are sure to present Obama with obstacles. Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), for example, gave reporters an emphatic "no" when asked whether he thought Obama's comments about cap-and-trade legislation would build momentum for climate legislation. "Cap and trade won't work," he said. Rockefeller is part of the "Gang of 15," a collection of moderate senators from the Midwest, Rust Belt and West who say the climate debate to date has not taken their interests into account (E&E Daily, Feb. 10). Some other Democratic lawmakers in the coalition said they are still open to compromise. "Congress is of a mind to do this, but we want to do it in the right way," said Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.).Sen. Ben Nelson (D-Neb.), who was one of a handful of Senate moderates who helped pass the $787 billion stimulus bill earlier this month, said Obama could use his influence to prod Congress -- but should pay attention to the national mood. "Under the right set of circumstances he can, under the wrong set of circumstances, it shouldn't happen," Nelson said. Obama also will need to work on the very same set of Senate Republicans who stood up to applaud his mention of climate change. "Times are terrible," explained Florida's Martinez. "We cannot do something that's going to be costly to consumers or unduly burdensome on industry. So we've got to do it in a way that is reasonable and for the times." South Carolina's Graham said he appreciated Obama's climate change position. But he found a big problem in what Obama did not mention: nuclear power. "It was a glaring omission to me," Graham said. "I'm sure the left doesn't want him to talk about it. But if you're serious about a cap-and-trade system that will work, and you have the power you need to keep a vibrant economy, wind and solar isn't going to get you there. To say otherwise is just not honest." Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), a senior member of Boxer's EPW Committee and a veteran of past climate debates, may have summed up Obama's challenge the best. "On a good day," he said, "it's going to be difficult to move climate change legislation."

#### Obama is a staunch supporter of Israel

Aamer Madhani

White House Correspondent (USA TODAY) - is a journalist for USA TODAY living in Washington, DC “At U.N., Obama affirms 'unshakeable' support for Israel” 9/22/2011 <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2011-09-21/Obama-Israel-United-Nations-Palestinian-Authority/50502546/1>

U.S. support for Israel remains "unshakeable," President Obama told the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday, and Palestinian leaders should ditch their plan to petition the international body for statehood. "Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations. If it were that easy, it would have been accomplished by now," Obama said. "Ultimately, it is the Israelis and the Palestinians - not us - who must reach agreement on the issues that divide them: on borders and on security, on refugees and Jerusalem." Obama's speech followed an onslaught of criticism from Republicans and Israeli advocates, who said the president was endangering Israel. Unlike previous high-profile comments on the Middle East, Obama avoided any mention of borders of a future Palestinian state. He also pointedly noted that Israel is "surrounded by neighbors that have waged repeated wars against it" and reflected on the plight of Israeli citizens in the decades-old conflict.

The president made the Israeli-Palestinian dispute the centerpiece of his annual address to the United Nations General Assembly, devoted to what the president called "the pursuit of peace in an imperfect world." This past year has seen an "extraordinary transformation," Obama said, citing government changes in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. The president's supporters in the American Jewish community heralded his remarks as demonstrating that he remains committed to safeguarding Israel, while some GOP lawmakers blasted Obama's call for the Palestinians to drop their statehood petition as toothless. "Once again, the president did not mention any consequences for U.S. funding for the Palestinians or for the U.N. if they proceeded down this anti-Israel, anti-peace course," said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., the chairwoman of House Foreign Affairs Committee. In the leadup to this week's meetings, Republicans blasted Obama's Israeli-Palestinian policy, charging that Obama was hostile to Israel's concerns. Obama's Middle East policy became a central issue in this month's special congressional election in New York, where a Republican swept to victory in a heavily Democratic and Jewish area. On Tuesday, Republican presidential candidate and Texas Gov. Rick Perry traveled to New York City to criticize Obama's Middle East policy, while fellow Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney accused the administration of "repeated efforts over three years to throw Israel under the bus. "With his speech, Obama made clear that he is taken a "common sense" approach in his Middle East policy that is ultimately "pro-Israel," countered Robert Wexler, a former Democratic congressman from Florida who is aiding the Obama re-election campaign's Jewish outreach efforts. Wexler also criticized Perry for supporting the building of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and calling for the United States to reconsider funding of the Palestinian Authority if it moves ahead with application toward statehood. If the U.N. pulled funding, the move would potentially endanger Israeli security and embolden Hamas, Wexler said. "Gov. Perry is advocating a set of policies that would undermine the state of Israel and harm the United States," Wexler said. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has clashed with Obama in the past, commended the U.S. president for "standing with Israel" before their meeting on the sidelines of the U.N. session. Obama also met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday. Obama's speech was contradictory because he heralded a year in which the Arab Spring led to the end of dictatorships in the Middle East and North Africa, but he did not back the Palestinians, said Marwan Muasher, a former Jordanian deputy prime minister. "Every day the Israeli occupation continues, it's going to be harder for the United States to argue … that if you're yearning for freedom that the U.S. is with you," said Muasher, a Middle East analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

#### Obama is pro-women issues

Lucy Madison Political Reporter, CBSNews.com “Amid perceived advantage, Obama touts pro-women message”

April 6, 2012http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544\_162-57410569-503544/amid-perceived-advantage-obama-touts-pro-women-message/?tag=contentMain;contentBody

Amid an ongoing debate over what some Democrats are calling the Republican "war on women," President Obama on Friday touted a distinctly pro-women agenda, delivering a personal message about his commitment to increasing equality and opportunities for women and girls of "all stages of life." The president, speaking at a White House forum on women and the economy, reflected on recent debates over political issues relating to women and women's health, arguing that "the conversation's been oversimplified." "Women are not some monolithic bloc. Women are not an interest group," he said. "You shouldn't be treated that way." The panel comes just days after a new USA Today/Gallup poll showed that women in 12 top battleground states favor the president by 18 points when matched up against Mitt Romney, the man many believe will be his Republican rival for the presidency come November. That's a 7-point boost for the president since the poll was conducted in January and February, and since the explosion of a number of controversial debates surrounding contraception and Planned Parenthood. Among men, the poll showed Romney leading Mr. Obama by one point. The national data shows a similar gender disparity: According to a Pew poll from March, Obama leads Romney 58 percent to 38 percent among women voters, while the two run about even among men. Surrounded onstage by a diverse group of accomplished women on Friday, the president talked about gender barriers that women in his own life have struggled to overcome. He pledged that for him, achieving equality is a "personal matter." "When I think about these efforts, when we put together this Council on Women and Girls, this is personal. That's what is at the heart of all our efforts. These are the experiences -- the prism through which I view these efforts," he said. "That's what we mean when we say that these issues are more than just a matter of policy. And when we talk about these issues that primarily impact women, we've got to realize they are not just women's issues; they are family issues, they are economic issues, they are growth issues, they are issues about American competitiveness, they are issues that impact all of us." The president cited legislation like the Lily Ledbetter Act for fair pay-- the first bill he signed into law upon taking office -- as well as efforts to help women business owners as evidence of his commitment to women. Still, he acknowledged, "once [women] get out of college we still have a lot of ground to cover." "Just 3 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are women," Mr. Obama said. "Fewer than 20 percent of the seats in Congress are occupied by women." "Is it possible that Congress will get more done if there were more women in Congress?" he joked, laughing. "Is that fair to say, Joe? I think it's fair to say. That is -- that is almost guaranteed." Romney's relationship with women voters has come under increased scrutiny as he appears increasingly poised to lock up the Republican presidential nomination. In a recent interview with Newsmax, the former Massachusetts governor seemed to acknowledge the disparity in the polls, responding to a question about the polling data that "I think this will pass as an issue as people understand our real position" on issues like birth control. He has also referred to his wife Ann as something of an ambassador to women, telling journalists in a speech at the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) earlier this week that his wife had been sending him "reports" about the issues women prioritize. "My wife has the occasion, as you know, to campaign on her own...She reports to me regularly that the issues women care about most is the economy and getting good jobs for their kids and for themselves. They're concerned about gasoline prices," Romney said. "That's what women care about in this country and my vision is to get America working again, short term and long term. "Democrats have wasted few opportunities to target Republicans over their positions on issues related to women. In a Friday interview with MSNBC, Democratic National Committee (DNC) chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz lambasted "Romney and the Republicans" for being "callously indifferent" to women's interests. "You know, what Mitt Romney and the Republicans have been doing to themselves every single day is showing women in this country day after day that they are callously indifferent to women's health, the priorities of women," she said. "You know, if they're still wondering why there's an 18-point gender gap and President Obama is ahead of Mitt Romney by that many points, then they really -- they really must believe these things that they're saying. Shocking."

#### **Obama avoides fiscal cliff and raising taxes on middle class**

Kristen, Welker. Welker, a native of Philadelphia, graduated from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts with a bachelor's degree cum laude in American History Kristen Welker joined NBC News as a network correspondent in Burbank, California in 2010 “Obama WH comments on ‘fiscal cliff’”

July 17 2012 http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/\_news/2012/07/17/12794623-obama-wh-comments-on-fiscal-cliff?lite

Is the Obama White House willing to follow Senate Democrats off the so-called "fiscal cliff"?

Not exactly. The White House today weighed in with a slightly different message: Congress should prevent the fiscal cliff -- the prospect of all the Bush-era tax cuts expiring, as well as automatic spending cuts taking effect -- from ever happening. During a gaggle aboard Air Force One, Deputy White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest was asked if the president supports Democrats who threatening to let all the Bush tax cuts expire -- for both the wealthy and middle class -- if they don't get a "good deal" from Republicans. ”The president believes firmly that there is a way for us to deal with our deficit challenges," Earnest said. He added that this potential way forward could also avoid the $1.2 trillion in automatic budget cuts (including defense spending) that will occur after the end of this year. Earnest’s comments stopped short of endorsing what Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) said Democrats were willing to do if Republicans refused to raise taxes on the wealthy. Speaking at the Brookings Institution on Monday, Murray said, “If we can’t get a good deal, a balanced deal that calls on the wealthy to pay their fair share then I will absolutely continue this debate into 2013,” meaning after the economy would presumably plunge off the cliff. Earnest also echoed a message that President Obama has touted for the past several days -- that the Congress should extend the Bush-era tax cuts for folks making less than $250,000.“The president does not believe that it's just middle-class families that should have to sacrifice to deal with our deficit challenges. We're all in this together, and that includes asking those wealthiest 2% of Americans, millionaires and billionaires, essentially, to do their fair share.to do their fair share.” Republicans have fired back. On Monday, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell accused Congressional Democrats of waging an “ideological crusade.” McConnell said, “Let me boil it down. Faced with the slowest economic recovery in modern times, chronic joblessness, and the lowest percentage of able-bodied Americans actually participating in the workforce in decades, Democrats’ one-point plan to revive the economy is this: you earn, we take. That’s apparently the only thing they’ve got. “According to a recent poll by the Pew Research Center, 44% of people believe increasing taxes on those making more than $250,000 would help the economy, versus just 22% who believe it will hurt it.

#### Obama will end arduous war in Afghanistan

The Long War Journal **“**US withdrawal from Afghanistan: the plan for 2012, 2013, and 2014”March 18, 2012 http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/03/us\_withdrawal\_from\_a.php

In June 2011, President Obama announced that the US would begin withdrawing military forces from Afghanistan and transferring responsibility for security to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The US goal is to be substantially out of Afghanistan by 2014, with ANSF responsible for the entire country. The implementation plan for 2012 has been publicized over the past nine months and is recapped below. The plan for 2013 is now emerging; what is known is summarized here for the first time. The plan for 2014 is still speculative. The plan for 2012 starting this spring, the US will draw down its troops from the current 90,000 to 68,000 by October 2012. Essentially, the surge of US forces deployed to Afghanistan in early 2009 is being withdrawn. As the withdrawal proceeds, the ANSF is expected to assume leadership for security operations in a large portion of the country. By the end of 2012, the areas of Afghan responsibility will contain about 50% of Afghan's population. This will become a significant test of ANSF capabilities, and will be an important indicator of the ANSF's ability to continue to expand its areas of responsibility into 2013.The ANSF will reach its end state goal of 352,000 troops by October 2012 and then stop growing. Significant shortfalls in quality, organizational structure, and capability will still exist, however. The US will deploy a large contingent of military trainers and advisers to Afghanistan this summer to address these issues. The plan for 2013The plan for 2013 is currently being developed. The final version will be presented for approval at the NATO summit in Chicago in May. While still incomplete, portions of the plan have been disclosed or can be deduced. According to The Guardian, Obama described the next phase of the transition as follows: "This includes shifting to a support role next year, in 2013, in advance of Afghans taking full responsibility for security in 2014. We're going to complete this mission, and we're going to do it responsibly." The most significant element of the plan is that US and ISAF forces will stop conducting combat operations in late 2013. The ANSF will then be responsible for executing all combat operations in Afghanistan. Security responsibility for additional areas of Afghanistan will be transferred to the ANSF during 2013. Perhaps 75% of Afghan's population will be living in areas under ANSF security leadership by the end of 2013. These areas will include substantial portions of the northern, western, and southern regions. Due to the stronger Taliban organization in the eastern region, however, it is likely to lag behind. The size of the ANSF will be maintained at 352,000 troops. US and ISAF mentoring and advising teams will concentrate on improving the quality of existing troops. Organizational development will focus on standing up support functions that are currently being performed by US and ISAF units. The number of US troops to remain in Afghanistan during 2013 is still being decided, but it appears that three options are being considered. According to a New York Times report, the three options are: A drawdown from 68,000 to 58,000 troops by the end of 2012, with a further drawdown to between 38,000 and 48,000 by June 2013. This would be a continuation of the current policy of gradual drawdown. Obama has stated that he prefers a gradual drawdown. Therefore, this is the most likely option. Maintaining 68,000 troops through the end of 2013. This is the US military commanders' preferred option since it maintains US force levels through the summer fighting season in 2013. However, US military commanders had previously wanted to maintain 90,000 troops through the end of 2012, and that plan was rejected last year. So, maintaining 68,000 troops in 2013 is probably a less likely option. A large and rapid drawdown, perhaps to 20,000 troops, by the end of 2013. This would leave only Special Operations Forces, counterterrorism forces, military trainers, and some support and security staff in Afghanistan. This is Vice President Biden's preferred option. But this option also was considered and rejected for 2012. And Obama has stated that a rapid drawdown was not his preferred option, either. Therefore, this too is an unlikely option. The plan for 2014 The plan for 2014 is much less clear. It will be highly dependent on the post-2014 plan, which is still in the early stages of negotiations with the Karzai administration. However, assuming a deal is reached, a 2014 plan is likely to include the following elements. The US force level will drop to between 10,000 and 20,000 troops. They will consist of Special Forces, counterterrorism forces, and military training personnel. They will be deployed to a small number of bases around the country. US/ISAF troops will continue their training of ANSF soldiers. Counterterrorism forces will concentrate mostly on high-value targets. The ANSF will be responsible for security operations for all of Afghanistan, including army and police functions. The ANSF will be maintained at 352,000 troops. It is possible, however, that plans will be put in place to begin cutting the number to 230,000 troops starting after 2014.

#### Obama will protect Israel

Katie Anderson Browser is a reporter for Bloomberg News “Obama Vows Strong Support for Israel in Aftermath of Attack” July 19, 2012 <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-07-19/obama-vows-strong-support-for-israel-in-aftermath-of-attack>

President Barack Obama vowed the U.S. will do everything possible to ensure Israel’s security in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in Bulgaria and instability in the region caused by upheaval in Syria.

He condemned the “barbaric terrorist attack” in Bulgaria that killed five Israeli tourists and said this is a moment of “great uncertainty” in the Mideast “given what’s happening in Syria.” “Now’s the time to make sure that we are doing everything we can to protect Israel’s security, and I want you to know that that’s something that should transcend party,” Obama said today at a campaign appearance at a West Palm Beach, Florida, retirement community. “That’s not a Republican or Democratic issue.” “We haven’t just preserved the unbreakable bond with Israel,” he said. “We have strengthened it.” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Lebanon’s Iranian-backed Hezbollah organization was behind the bombing in Bulgaria and vowed to track down the perpetrators.

#### Obama supports grants for teachers

Jeffery Mervis he speaks about the politics of U.S. science to both scientific and lay audiences “Obama Seeks More Money for Master Science Teachers” July 18 2012. http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2012/07/obama-seeks-more-money-for-maste.html

The Obama Administration wants to give a $20,000 salary bonus to thousands of the best elementary and secondary school science and math teachers in the country. But the idea of creating a Master Teacher Corps program, unveiled today by the White House, stands little chance of winning the necessary funding this year from Congress. Master teachers—an elite group of teachers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields—would mentor other teachers, serve as role models to draw talented students into the profession, and work with community leaders to improve science and math education. The corps was a key recommendation in a September 2010 report from the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, which called it "a sufficient carrot to attract and retain the best [STEM] teachers. "The president's plan would be to start with 2500 teachers—50 at 50 sites across the country—and add locations over the next 4 years until there were 10,000 teachers in the corps. The teachers, who would serve for 5 years, would be selected by the local districts and deployed as needed. A Weekly Chat on the Hottest Topics in Science Thursdays 3 p.m. EDT The program is intended "to elevate the prestige" of the profession and highlight the importance of science and math in the schools, says Education Secretary Arne Duncan. "There have been pockets of creativity, but until now there has been a lack of resources. I think that school districts are more than ready for this idea." In a press briefing yesterday, Cecilia Muñoz, head of the White House Domestic Policy Council, emphasized the role that STEM teachers play "in equipping our students with the knowledge they will need to get jobs in the high-growth fields that fund innovation. "Gerry Wheeler, interim executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, praised the Administration's plan. "We have to give greater attention to STEM education, and the teacher corps is one good way to do that." Wheeler would like to see the majority of the teachers working at the elementary and middle schools, so that "they can catch students when they are young and give them a sense of the careers that are possible in the STEM fields. "Funding for the master teacher program is contingent on the Department of Education receiving its full request for a broader, $5 billion initiative in its 2013 budget called the RESPECT (Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence, and Collaborative Teaching) project. But that's not likely to happen. Although the status of the overall federal budget for next year remains in limbo, the House of Representatives spending panel that funds the department coincidentally marked up its 2013 appropriations bill today. The bill contains no money for the RESPECT project, a collection of several initiatives that include attracting and retaining better STEM teachers. The panel also zeroed out a request for $150 million for a new program that the Administration had proposed as a successor to the department's Math and Science Partnerships, which gave grants to school districts to improve science and math instruction. The chair of a different House committee, one that oversees education and authorizes new programs, is a fierce opponent of the Administration's attempt to spend more money on targeted new programs. Instead, Representative John Kline (R-MN), has proposed legislation that would give money to local school authorities to use as they see fit. Asked to comment on the idea of a STEM master teacher corps, his spokesperson cited Kline's reaction to a report earlier this year that tallied the hundreds of existing federal programs aimed at improving STEM education. "Investing in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is a worthwhile endeavor—but pumping billions of dollars into programs that may be duplicative or unproductive is just plain foolish," Kline said then.

#### Obama immigration policy is the best

Trib.com “Obama is just doing what is good for the country” June 20, 2012 http://trib.com/opinion/columns/obama-is-just-doing-what-is-good-for-the country/article\_922c6095-2eec-5a93-a310-415402c17453.html

In helping young illegal immigrants stay in the country, President Obama did the right thing for the wrong reason and in a strange context. Obama decreed that illegal immigrants who came here as children could stay without fear of deportation, if the following conditions are met: They’ve been in the country for at least five years. They’re in school or high-school graduates, or have served in the military. They are under 30 and have committed no crimes. More than 1 million people may qualify. This was the beating heart of the Dream Act, stopped in 2010 by Senate Republicans. The major difference is that Obama is not creating an amnesty. He’s letting these young people stay, study and work in the United States without harassment for periods of two years, which can be renewed. The beneficiaries are quite blameless. Their parents brought them to America as children. Having grown up here, these kids are for all practical purposes American. When it comes time for a real amnesty, these are the sort of young people we would put first in line. And if America had a normal immigration program, many in this group would have been welcomed through the front door. Meanwhile, Obama’s executive action covers only those who have obtained or are getting a basic education and have been law-abiding. Thus, it excludes illegal immigrants who could pose a burden on our society (even if they arrived at age 2). Obama clearly chose the timing for political reasons. The obvious objective is to woo Latino voters, who will play key roles in several swing states this November. Actually, polls show most Hispanics are not overly supportive of open-border policies that lead to depressed wages. But they are understandably aggravated at seeing the occasional young person pulled out of the neighborhood and sent to a country that he or she would consider foreign. The context for Obama’s move is quite interesting. Obama is the first president in a long time to have taken the immigration laws seriously. He’s been going after employers who hire undocumented workers. Deportations during his administration have exceeded 1 million, the most since 1950. His active enforcement of the immigration laws has made him suspect among some Hispanic activists while winning scant praise from right-wingers. So this modest move toward immigration reform makes political sense. But do we want an immigration program that changes as a function of the next election? No. We should want a panel of experts determining our labor needs on an annual basis. How many people and what skills does our economy require? And we should want these experts to recognize that unskilled workers belong to the same labor market that assures good pay for scarce biochemists. No iron law of the universe forbids letting their wages rise along with demand for their services. During the recent Republican candidates’ debates, some of the talk on immigration approached ugly. All the contenders, Mitt Romney included, vowed to oppose even the modestly conceived Dream Act. Now the assumed nominee, Romney is modulating his views a bit, calling Obama’s move a block to a bipartisan solution rather than a reward for lawbreaking. A reasonable bipartisan solution would create a tight system for enforcing the laws against hiring illegal workers — one that would include biometric identification (such as scans of the eye’s iris), which can’t be counterfeited. It would sponsor a last amnesty to put most illegal immigrants “on the path to citizenship.” And it would include the aforementioned panel to monitor the program with an eye toward what’s good for the country. Say that again: What’s good for the country

#### **Obama is a superior option than any alternative**

The Baltimore sun “Obama better than qualified” July 19 2012. http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-07-19/news/bs-ed-qualifications-letter-20120719\_1\_president-barack-obama-operation-neptune-spear-policy

In response to the letter from Gail Householder ("Obama fails VP test," July 18), it is surprising that anyone is still questioning President Barack Obama's experience and qualifications as the chief executive of the United States. Enough! It is an antiquated argument and it is insulting to recite his resume prior to becoming president and pretend that it is not impressive. Since coming to office, he has enhanced his qualifications even further. He passed necessary health care reform which makes it impossible for pre-existing conditions to bankrupt people who should be able to concentrate on healing rather than hoping their insurance company will cover their condition and not impose unfair lifetime limits on benefits. With his authorization of Operation Neptune Spear, a terrorist who evaded prosecution for more than 15 years was killed. He pushed for the military to repeal a policy which discharged honorable service members for disclosing their sexual orientation. He began tackling a failing war on drugs by asking Congress to reexamine and change the disparity in sentencing crack and cocaine offenses, a policy that has overwhelming affected lower class citizens. He signed the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure Act which eliminated mystery fee and rate increases, in turn, strengthening consumer protection. According to BBC World Service polling, since President Obama took office, global views of the United States has become more positive. Ending a 7-year war, the commander-in-chief pulled forces out of Iraq. He also announced a drawdown strategy for Afghanistan which will end the combat mission by 2014. Those achievements can be added to the myriad of other successes Mr. Obama has pushed through despite the country's divisive attitude bordering on Civil War proportions. Who else has accomplished what our current president has achieved? Who else has President Obama's experience? His opponents can argue other points, perhaps even policy issues for a change, but to protest that he lacks experience and qualifications deserves ridicule at best. Syreeta Gross, Aberdeen

## AT: Politics – HSR is Popular

#### HSR is popular

Travis, **Pittman**. KING 5 staff writer, **July 18 2012**, “Light rail turns 3, ridership keeps growing”. KING 5 online. http://www.king5.com/news/local/Light-rail-turns-3-ridership-keeps-growing-162925666.html (added by JA)

**Sound Transit’s Central Link Light Rail line turned 3 years old** Wednesday, and **the agency says ridership continues to grow. Sound Transit said 21.6 million riders have taken the train since it opened** July 18, 2009. **Second quarter 2012 numbers** who **ridership up 10 percent over the same period last year**, with an estimated 2.19 million riders. Sound Transit said about **28,000 riders use light rail every weekday**.

"The strong ridership growth we're seeing quarter over quarter three years after opening day shows **Link continues to mature and grow as the regional economy rebounds**," said Pierce County Executive Pat McCarthy, who serves as the Sound Transit Board’s chairman.

The University Link line, connecting downtown Seattle with Capitol Hill and the University of Washington, is expected to open in 2016. A south-end extension between Sea-Tac Airport and S. 200th Street is expected to open around the same time. **A third extension between UW and the Northgate neighborhood is expected to open** in 2021.

**Extensions are also planned to Bellevue, Redmond, Mercer Island and Federal Way.**

#### HSR finds support in California

Dakota, **Smith**. Journalist, **July 18 2012**, “Officials all aboard for California's high-speed rail”. Daily News Los Angeles. http://www.dailynews.com/ci\_21106775/officials-all-aboard-californias-high-speed-rail?source=most\_viewed (added by JA)

Gov. Jerry Brown joined **local and state officials** in downtown L.A. on Wednesday to **cheer legislation authorizing billions for the state's high-speed rail system**. Brown and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa alternatively praised the $68 billion high-speed rail project, and threw barbs at critics, including media coverage of the railway, the first such network planned for the U.S. "**Millions of people are going to come to California and they are going to ride the rail**," Brown promised, adding that some can't see the future because "their heads are buried in the sand." **The legislation** signed by Brown **authorizes $6 billion in federal funding** and bond financing **for the railway's Central Valley to San Fernando Valley section, the first to start construction.** **It also provides about $2 billion for local rail projects statewide**, including improving Metrolink rail and roadway crossings throughout the San Fernando Valley.

Earlier this month, **the California Senate** narrowly **approved the funding**, a reflection of mounting criticism throughout the state of the high-speed system, which continues to have major funding gaps.The first rail section is a 300-mile rail line from Madera in the Central Valley to the San Fernando Valley. Construction will start in early 2013 on the first 130 miles starting in Madera. Officials don't yet know where the San Fernando Valley stop will be, but they're considering locations in San Fernando, the Branford/Sylmar area and Burbank. **The high-speed rail system** - modeled after similar transportation networks in countries like Japan and China - **is viewed by supporters as a way to quickly move people between the state's urban areas, while increasing tourism and providing environmental benefits by reducing the use of cars and planes.** When completed, the line will allow San Francisco residents to hop on the train and reach L.A. in about two hours and 40 minutes. L.A. residents could zip out to Yosemite's Half Dome, in Mariposa County, for an afternoon hike, said Dan Richards, chairman of the High-Speed Rail Authority. Within the Southern California portion of the route, the Valley station will become a key connection as visitors enter the area. After stopping at the Valley station, the rail line will go through the Valley region and connect to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. Construction would likely start on that segment around 2028, officials said Wednesday. The High-Speed Rail Authority is currently eyeing two routes for that stretch between Union Station and the Valley. One alternative would leave Union Station, go north underneath Elysian Park, come out near Riverside Drive, travel through Glendale, then head toward Sylmar along the Metrolink right of the way. The other option would leave Union Station, travel at-grade along the L.A. River, wrap around Glendale, and travel at grade to Sylmar along the Metrolink right of way. An environmental impact report is expected in the next year on the various alternatives. Still, numerous hurdles remain, including funding for the segment from Bakersfield to the San Fernando Valley. The current funding is only for Madera to Bakersfield. Asked how the gap would be made up, Brown appeared nonplussed. "It's not a problem," he said. Critics have also seized on the mounting costs of the $68 billion high-speed rail line, originally proposed at $40 billion. Senate Republican Leader Bob Huff, R-Diamond Bar, recently blasted the bill funding the railway's first segment, saying that Democrats were "forcing high-speed rail on us." "Closing schools for three weeks, while spending $8 billion on 130 miles of train tracks defies logic and is irresponsible," Huff said in a written statement. "I don't understand the priorities of the legislative Democrats - clearly they are not the same as the rest of Californians." Central Valley farmers have also pushed back against the project, claiming it will result in a loss of agricultural land. In Kern County, more than 450 homes and 1,000 residents would be reportedly displaced by the high-speed railway. At Wednesday's event, **Brown** repeatedly **denounced critics, arguing the builders of the Golden Gate Bridge had to overcome opposition. Reporters were forced to shout questions at Brown so their queries about financing details could be heard among the crowd of celebrating construction workers and politicians.** "It's a matter of faith, of discipline," Brown said, nearly shouting back.

#### Colorado residents optimistic about HSR

Kevin, **Duggan**. Coloradoan.com staff writer, **July 18 2012**, “Light rail turns 3, ridership keeps growing”. KING 5 online. http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20120718/NEWS01/307180054/New-study-digs-into-details-high-speed-rail-possibilities?odyssey=nav%7Chead (added by JA)

WINDSOR — Imagine boarding a bus in downtown Fort Collins, taking a short ride to a transit station and boarding a high-speed train. Imagine that train spiriting you away to Denver International Airport, Union Station or perhaps a connection with another train to Summit County ski resorts. Imagine those trains traveling at speeds greater than 100 mph. Sound interesting? Does it sound feasible, given that building the systems to support this imagined scenario could cost several billion dollars? **Would the speed of the train** — especially if the trip is quicker than driving — **motivate you to ride it?** **Those and other questions are being asked through the latest state- and federally funded study on** the feasibility of bringing **high-speed rail** service to the Front Range. **The envisioned system would connect Fort Collins to Pueblo and major cities in between**, said David Krutsinger, transit and rail program manager with the Colorado Department of Transportation.The Interregional Connectivity Study, or ICS, will look into details that previous studies did not examine, Krutsinger said prior to a public meeting on the project Wednesday at the Windsor Recreation Center.

For example, a study completed in 2010 done by the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority did not look at look at how to get a high-speed train through metro Denver, he said. That study’s ridership projections and estimated costs also will be re-evaluated. **“A lot of the assumptions, such as the availability of capacity along freight lines, have changed,”** he said. **“We’ll look at everything, including the benefits and the costs, to see how feasible high-speed or commuter rail may be.”** The study will focus on the possibilities of using two primary routes: One would be the existing freight rail corridor used by BNSF, and the other would be a new “greenfield” route that would parallel the Interstate 25 corridor. Either could work well for the Fort Collins area, Krutsinger said. The BNSF route was the preferred alternative for commuter rail in a recently completed environmental impact statement for the North I-25 region. At the same time the ICS is being conducted, a separate study will look at the feasibility of running high-speed rail service up the Interstate 70 corridor west of Denver. Combined, the routes would cover about 300 miles.The studies will consider widely different issues, but will be connected in that the future rail services are likely to be connected, even if it’s decades away, Krutsinger said.

The population of the Front Range is expected to double by 2035, said Beth Vogelsang, a planner on the study. **Traffic levels also are expected to double, which is why alternative transportation modes may be needed to move people and goods.** For a high-speed system to work, it would have to meet the state’s environmental and social needs, she said. But the economic impact also is important.“It has to have benefits beyond its implementation costs,” she said. The Front Range study is budgeted for $2.5 million, while the mountain study is expected to cost about $1.35 million.

The study process, which is expected to be completed in about a year, will include substantial public input. About 40 people attended Wednesday’s meeting. **Fort Collins resident** Gray Thomas, who has been involved with regional transportation issues for several years, **said he’s glad the study will include a land-use component**. But it will only weigh existing land-use plans and not the impact building a train station would have on local demographics.

“They aren’t thinking about the ‘build-it-and-they-will-come factor,’ ” he said. “**The system itself could have a tremendous impact that really needs to be taken into account**.” The Rocky Mountain Rail Authority estimated that building a high-speed rail system along the Front Range would cost $7 billion, Krutsinger said. A mountain system would cost $14 billion. The numbers are big, but not unrealistic when you consider the cost of continually building more and wider highways, said Pete Rickershauser of the rail freight company OmniTrax. Rickershauser is a member of the project’s leadership team.

**In 20 years, the population will be much larger and residents will still need ways to move around**, he said.“**What happens if the mobility is worse than it is now?** What are we going to do about it?” he said. “**If you look at it in that context, it is feasible.”**

#### HSR is politically appealing for a myriad of reasons

Matt, **Pressberg**. Annenberg Digital News columnist, **July 13 2012**, “Why We Should Celebrate High-Speed Rail”. Digital Tommy. http://www.neontommy.com/news/2012/07/why-we-should-celebrate-high-speed-rail (added by JA)

Californians, these are very exciting times. Our **state government has agreed at last to bring** our **rail system into the modern era**. **California High-Speed Rail is a worthy endeavor that should prove to be an immensely popular alternative to** our **clogged freeways and painful airports**. **It is a long overdue embrace of an indispensable transit option in practically every other leading country in the world aside from this one, and it will make moving around California** so **much easier for residents, tourists and businesses alike.** Asphalt apologists have it wrong when they point to financially pained countries like Italy and Spain’s (excellent) systems as proof that high-speed rail has little relevance as a marker of progress. Maybe instead of “If insolvent Spain has high-speed rail, how great could it be?” we should be considering that “Even insolvent Spain has high-speed rail.” This is also why I take all popular sentiment at this preliminary stage with much skepticism. **USC did a poll where voters were split approximately in thirds on whether they’d drive, fly or take high-speed rail from L.A. to the Bay Area.** I do love the idea of people who have never used a technology opining on whether they will use it in the future (I’m sure people in the 1980s wouldn’t believe they’d watch sports on a cell phone), but **according to California High-Speed Rail’s website, the trip will take two hours and 48 minutes to get from Union Station in L.A. to San Francisco’s Transbay Terminal. Aside from running drugs or moving furniture, I can’t see why a rational person taking a short trip would opt for the six-hour drive on the I-5 and then** the joys of **driving and parking a car** in San Francisco. LAX to SFO or OAK isn’t fantastically efficient or fun either. The only kind of survey I’d trust on high-speed rail would begin with the question “Have you ever been on true high-speed rail?” and proceed to poll just those people who answered affirmatively. To be clear, this project will cost a ton of money and will obliterate its budget. These massive undertakings almost always do. In this case, however, I think **there are some particularly good justifications for such a sizable investment.** For starters, the California High-Speed Rail project has a lot of initial fixed costs in building the track and buying all the rolling stock, but **operating expenses and maintenance on electric trains should be relatively low, considering the alternative of flying gasoline-powered airplanes through the sky multiple times a day. Politicians have been talking about reducing our dependency on foreign oil since dinosaurs were decomposing into it; a high-speed rail system that pulls passengers from planes, cars and buses would actually do something about it.** Second, we currently have a combination of historically low interest rates and high unemployment, especially among construction workers hit hard by the housing bust. Steel prices are also depressed, in large part due to the building slowdown in China. **It appears as good a time as any to borrow cheap money and use it to hire construction workers to build rail infrastructure.** And finally, we should remember that **throughout the history of advanced civilization, it has been the role of government to establish and improve upon transportation infrastructure**, and generally the governments who provide the highest quality, democratically available transportation infrastructure use it to achieve huge economic advantages. **Spending money to go faster and make distances smaller is a time-tested recipe for success and progress, and is never regretted in the long run**. Nobody is mad that we built the Panama Canal. Therefore, **high-speed rail does not have to turn a profit (even though it usually does) to pay dividends, both financial and in terms of quality of life.** It will absorb a lot of the intra-California air traffic, clearing some of the short commuter flights from our airports, which will free up landing slots and reduce overcrowding. This has been happening in Europe for years, as travelers prefer trains for journeys similar in length to the planned mainline runs of California High-Speed Rail. Airlines can then dump some of their less popular regional routes and focus on the jumbo jet medium-to-long haul flights that tend to be more profitable for them and open up new destinations for us. **Fast trains should also be popular with road tourists**, from those doing the Grand Tour of California to your typical Bay Area couple who wants to spend a weekend in L.A. International tour groups, who often move around our huge state by bus and really deserve a better impression of America than that, would seem to be a natural constituency. Add the proposed XpressWest train, with a Palmdale-Victorville link that would connect the Las Vegas Strip to California High-Speed Rail, and **rail travel could quickly become the preferred option for many of these iconic “road” trips. It would also pull some of that traffic off the roads so people who are not going out of town can get home a little quicker on a Friday afternoon.** A premium-priced Business Class service seems like a home run. With the new train’s projected travel time plus brief hops on BART and the Red Line, the office towers of Downtown San Francisco and those in Downtown L.A. would be about three hours door-to-door, with nearly all the time spent in a comfortable and relatively quiet setting with Internet, cell phone coverage and a desk. The Expo, Gold and extended Purple lines put a whole bunch of other commercial centers, such as Century City, Santa Monica and Pasadena also just an easy one-transfer trip away from Union Station. Tech execs in Silicon Valley and government officials in Sacramento would have similarly productive and efficient trips to take care of business down south. It wouldn’t be a bad idea to equip the trains with some office equipment: Let them scan documents and print presentations on the train and charge mini bar prices. They’ll pay, and that will help subsidize cheaper economy and youth/student fares. Since I believe in high-speed rail and want so much for this project to succeed even beyond my optimistic expectations, I want to call attention to my primary concern. There is something that can neutralize many of the advantages of California High-Speed Rail and make it just another ordeal-filled travel experience that proves unpopular and ends up a giant waste of money. That something is airport-style security. High-speed rail, as I’ve experienced it in Europe, works because it’s so painless. Have a 1 p.m. train? Just show up at the platform at 12:55, board the train, toss your bag on a rack and sit down. The train doesn’t wait to verify passengers or bags, so it almost always leaves on time, and the conductor comes to you while it’s rolling to check tickets. Forget clear plastic bags and 3.5-ounce limits; you can bring full-size cosmetics and outside beverages and don’t have to worry about getting your stuff picked through if you happen to leave a lighter or worse in your backpack. I may think airport security is excessive, overly politically correct and mostly theatrical, but I understand the extra precautions taken when traveling with strangers in a confined space in the sky. For those who would instinctively advocate for a similar setup on high-speed rail, my argument is as follows: Trains are not airplanes when it comes to security concerns. You can’t crash a train into something on purpose, and if passengers were threatened by the environment in the train, they could always pull the emergency brake, smash the windows and escape. This is not possible at 30,000 feet, although certain people I’ve had the distinct privilege of flying with have made me ponder taking my chances out on the wing. Airport-style security is unnecessary and would add costs both direct (security officers) and indirect (less efficient and less frequent trains), putting taxpayer-funded high-speed rail at a competitive disadvantage. Why would we want to do that? **High-speed rail is not the untested venture its critics would like to believe. It has been proven popular and successful in applications very similar to California’s proposal. High-speed rail works. California High-Speed Rail will work too, as long as we let it.**

#### National train service remains popular

Rob, **Lovitt**. NBC News contributor, **Oct 7 2011**, “Amtrak: more popular - and more at risk - than ever”. NBC News. <http://overheadbin.nbcnews.com/_news/2011/10/07/8207263-amtrak-more-popular-and-more-at-risk-than-ever?lite> (added by JA)

It’s official: **During its fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, Amtrak carried more passengers than during any year in its four-decade history.** “The final figures will be released next week,” said Amtrak spokesman Steve Kulm, “but we have reached and surpassed the 30-million mark.” Expanded schedules, changing demographics and the hassles of air travel have boosted the appeal of train travel, say industry observers. “We believe part of the increase is the improvement in the economy,” said Marc Magliari, a spokesperson in Amtrak’s Chicago office. “But part of it is also that people tried us as gas prices fluctuated and have decided to stay with us.” In fact, **U.S. train travel is enjoying a remarkable surge in popularity** — **everywhere**, it seems, **except in the halls of Congress**. Even as Amtrak posts its best numbers ever, the federal funding that keeps it alive is on the verge of being slashed. In May, The Wall Street Journal reported that Amtrak officials were projecting an operating loss of $506 million for this fiscal year, up from a loss of $419.9 million last year. Last month, a House appropriations subcommittee proposed cutting Amtrak’s operating budget by 60 percent — from $561 million in 2011 to $227 million in 2012 — along with a 2.6 percent cut to its $923 million capital budget. By comparison, the proposed Senate budget for Amtrak calls for $544 million in operating funds and $937 million in capital funds. That works out to a total of $1.5 billion compared to $1.1 billion in the House, both of which are considered tentative as all federal spending is subject to a temporary bill that authorizes funding only through Nov. 18. “The House Republicans seem to have targeted state-supported rail,” said Kulm, referring to the 15 programs in which Amtrak partners with state governments to provide local train service. “That would mean the loss, potentially, of 150 trains a day.” That may sound like hyperbole but it’s not far from the truth. This summer, Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.), chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), chairman of the Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, proposed legislation that would open the door to private competition on state-supported routes and other services now managed by Amtrak. “After 40 years of costly and wasteful Soviet-style operations under Amtrak, this proposal encourages private sector competition, investment and operations in U.S. passenger rail service,” said Mica in a statement. “The nation cannot afford to continue throwing money away on this highly subsidized, ineffective disaster. Fiery words aside, Amtrak will continue running in the short term with a combined operations and capital budget of almost $1.5 billion. “They’ll avoid service cuts on this go-round,” said Ross Capon, president and CEO of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, a rail-advocacy group. “But the fact is Amtrak is going to be forced to lay people off and cut back on some of the heavy maintenance that’s required.” Which, in turn, could make Amtrak’s new ridership record one for the ages. “Those **state-supported routes are a huge chunk of our ridership**,” said Kulm. “**That’s where the largest increases in ridership are occurring**.”

#### Amtrak gaining popularity

Joseph, **Rose**. The Oregonian, author, **March 4 2012**, “Amtrak: more popular - and more at risk - than ever”. Oregon Live. <http://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/index.ssf/2012/03/amtrak_gaining_popularity_amon.html> (added by JA)

After an especially taxing day at his corporate communications job in downtown Portland, Dan Anderson was looking forward to the evening train commute to Oregon City. "It gives me a chance to unwind a little before I get home," Anderson said, settling into a soft leather seat and opening his MacBook. "Free WiFi. I can order a beer. And it sure beats sitting in traffic." Wait. Comfy chairs? Web-surfing? Brewskis on a dining car? Is TriMet running a Hogwarts Express for Portland area commuters that pulls into a secret MAX station? Actually, this isn't TriMet. Anderson is part of a small but growing group of Clackamas County commuters spurning the region's transit agency in favor of Amtrak for daily trips in and out of the city. Last year, **daily ridership between Salem and Portland on Amtrak jumped more than 22 percent to 24,146 boardings, making it the rail carrier's fastest growing West Coast corridor**. **The number of monthly passes on the line**, meanwhile, **increased by 14 percent**. Every morning, they gather at Oregon City's picturesque station to wait for the 7:24 Amtrak Cascades. The non-stop, 20-minute ride to Portland's Union Station is much faster than any TriMet bus or light-rail route offered. It's also cheaper. **Riders rave about how there's ample parking at the station, where they can leave their vehicles for the day**. Becca Bishop said the train conductor in a suit and hat opening the door is a nice little touch from of a more neighborly time. "I love how they still learn everyone's name and greet you in the morning," she said. But nostalgia isn't the only whistle calling to commuters from Salem and Portland's southern suburbs. **Commuting via Amtrak can be affordable and convenient**: For commuting to and from downtown Portland, Amtrak can be a surprisingly effective solution for some of those who live outside the city limits. Dan Anderson, who takes the train between Oregon City and Portland, talks about what makes it a good solution for his commute.Gas prices in the Portland area are expected to hit an average of $4.50 a gallon by Memorial Day, according to analysis site Gasbuddy.com. Also, TriMet is stuck in the mud of another budget crisis, creating anxieties about future reliability and schedule cuts. **State transportation officials are** certainly **gearing up for the possibility of more passengers**. Using $36.6 million in federal stimulus money, the Oregon Department of Transportation's Rail Division has purchased two Talgo train sets that are expected to arrive this summer. As a result, **Amtrak should be able to expand service along the** 466-mile **Cascades route running from Eugene to Vancouver, B.C**. A little extra marketing money to target commuters probably wouldn't hurt, either. "I don't think most people are aware that that we have two trains that stop in Oregon City each morning on their way to Union Station," said Scott Hurd, station agent at the recently remodeled Portland stop. "**On the East Coast, people automatically think of Amtrak for commuting.** Not here." A century ago, before the rise of the automobile, scores of daily travelers took interurban rail lines such as the Red Electric and the Oregon Electric Railway, which ran several trains a day on what is now Southwest Multnomah Boulevard and Interstate 5. But these days, passenger rail is a ghost of those glory days. For the Cascades route, Oregon and Washington contract with Amtrak to run the trains on freight tracks. With more than 850,000 Amtrak riders in 2011, the corridor was the seventh most popular in the nation. But with just five train sets running along the corridor, Oregon is limited to two daily Cascades round-trips between Portland and Eugene. If you need to get from Salem to Portland, for example, northbound trains depart at 6:42 and 10:12 each morning. The vast majority of commuters catch the first one. The next southbound Cascades train doesn't roll out of Union Station until 6:15 p.m., nearly 12 hours later, followed by one at 9:10 p.m. "It can make for a long day," said Tom Herrett, a Salem resident who recently retired from the U.S. Geological Survey but continues to take the train north to do volunteer work in Portland. "That's the one downside." Still, **Herrett said a little extra time in the city beats the 50-mile slog in Interstate 5 traffic that he drove for 17 years before switching to Amtrak.** "A lot of people do that Salem-to-Portland drive," Herrett said. "I'd see the same cars every day. It's like a community going up and down I-5." The state would love to get some of those Willamette Valley drivers clogging up the highway on board Amtrak. But no one is predicting a rail revival anytime soon. In fact, Amtrak still counts on Oregon to subsidize Cascades service with $5 million a year, funded by custom vehicle license plate fees. While growing, ridership at the Oregon City station was only 9,165 in 2011. (By comparison, some 330,000 riders boarded and alighted TriMet's 16 daily WES commuter rail trains at the Beaverton Transit Center during the same period). Meanwhile, passenger rail continues to be a political punching bag. President Obama has proposed spending $2.7 billion on high-speed rail in fiscal year 2013, while Republican presidential frontrunner Mitt Romney has promised that he would end all federal funding to Amtrak. Dan Anderson boards Amtrak in Oregon City for his commute to Portland. He said he likes the friendliness of the folks with Amtrak. He says they were calling him by name after his first couple of trips. But with addition of the new Talgo trains this year, ODOT rail planner Bob Melbo said the state is at least moving toward future expansion, including the possibility of a morning southbound train out of Portland that would return from Eugene in the early evening. Oregon, which has already been awarded $19.7 million from the federal high-speed intercity rail program, wants to eventually offer six round trips per day and boost on-time performance to 95 percent with trains going up to 110 mph. "We're hopefully going to do things that will make trains even more attractive for Portland-to-Salem commuters," Melbo said. Anderson, 33, has some serious road-warrior credentials. Unwilling to uproot his family from Mollala, he spent two years driving his SUV to and from an office job with T-Mobile in Bellevue, Wash., daily. When the Dachis Group in Portland hired him last August, he decided to re-examine his commuting ways. Obviously, he was sick of driving. The cost of a TriMet monthly pass is $92, a bargain compared to what he was spending on gas, but the fastest transit trip downtown –even those incorporating the MAX green Line – would take more than an hour. He was also concerned by TriMet's ongoing schedule cuts. Then Anderson remembered the Amtrak station signs he had seen in Oregon City. A book of 10 one-way Amtrak fares between Oregon City and Portland is $21; the same book of tickets for TriMet costs $24. Anderson's monthly pass is $58, still far less than what it could cost to drive and park. On a recent morning, Anderson's wife dropped him off at the Oregon City station on her way to her KinderCare job in Tualatin. Diesel-powered Train No. 500 pulled into the station, sound like an iron giant letting off a sigh as it braked. Inside, the train was already teeming with commuters from Salem, hunched over laptop computers and cups of coffee from the dining car. The ride was quiet and smooth, the scenery out the window a blur of warehouses, trees and flashing railroad crossings lights before the downtown skyline appeared. Seventeen minutes after leaving Oregon City, Anderson was off the train, walking through the marble-and-neon-sign grotto of Union Station, on his way to his downtown office on foot. Believe it or not, Anderson said he has yet to have an unpleasant Amtrak experience. There was one morning when the trains were cut off by a Washington landslide. But Amtrak paid to have a cab take Anderson to Union Station. "Nice customer service move," he said.

#### Colorado residents excited for HSR

**The Coloradoan**, **Jul 18 2012**, “High-speed rail may be light years away, but solutions deserve discussion”. The Coloradoan. <http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20120717/OPINION01/307180024/Light-rail-may-light-years-away-solutions-deserve-discussion> (added by JA)

Did you hear the one about the train? Like a desert mirage, the perennial illusion of high-speed rail wavers tantalizingly over the Front Range before dissipating for a year or two. A glance through the Coloradoan’s archives show several sightings of the railway. Feasibility studies, grants to look at corridors, drawings, maps — there have been no shortage of plans afoot to connect Fort Collins to Pueblo with a gleaming metal bullet of optimism. Each story carries with it a vein of hope, a yearning that this on-again, off-again dream will get closer to reality. We can’t help it. Every time someone whispers, “train,” we fall for it again. This evening, **the Colorado Department of Transportation is holding an open house in Windsor to again bring up the notion of a rail corridor along the Front Range.**The meetings are one step in a planned feasibility study that is expected to wrap up before the end of 2013. While there are no new plans to be released, project information will be available, and there will be presentations on the concept. **For many Northern Coloradans, high-speed rail is the stuff of childhood dreams** — ridiculously expensive, but **technologically within our grasp and capable of changing thousands of lives by forever altering traffic congestion along I-25.** And, just like the stuff of childhood dreams, a personal jet pack may get off the ground faster than the Front Range’s commuter train. It’s a daunting process — building a nearly state-long commuter railway would cost several billion dollars and obtaining the rights of way and conducting environmental impact studies would take years alone. Yet, we’ll be at this evening’s meeting, even if we feel like we’ve been here before. **The allure of more details or infinitesimal progress on high-speed rail is just too tempting to pass up.** If you’ve ever griped about the traffic on I-25, we hope you’ll be there, too. A solution could be decades off, but we need to make our voices heard and face what seems like a glacial pace to ensure progress is moving forward

#### Kansas City leaders embracing HSR

**Kansas City Star**, **Jul 15 2012**, “KC’s leaders know action on light rail is long overdue”. Kansas City Star. <http://www.kansascity.com/2012/07/15/3706318/kcs-leaders-know-light-rail-action.html> (added by JA)

“We’ll build it, and the heck with those of you who don’t want to come.” Expect a more politely verbalized version of that sentiment to continue coming from City Hall when the topic is Kansas City’s inability to get light rail up and running. It’s looking like **city efforts toward** such **commuter rail will finally come to fruition.** Or rather, the beginnings of such a service, with a starter line downtown for streetcars that eventually could be extended to more of the city. Mail-in ballots are due by the end of the month from about 600 downtown residents who will decide whether to create a taxing system necessary to help pay for the line. **It’s likely that enough people will vote yes.** Most **downtown residents understand the added value and vibrancy of such public transportation ventures.** For the naysayers who have consistently deep-sixed light rail: You’ll still be able to have your say. But the folks in charge at City Hall are clearly tired of listening. For those who haven’t been following this saga’s latest turns, the plan now is for a 2.2-mile streetcar line linking the River Market through downtown to Crown Center. The city lost out on a $25 million federal grant last month. (It wasn’t a shock. The city had already been given funds from the same federal funding trough.) So last week the City Council shuffled $2 million from coffers to keep the plan upright, mostly for engineering studies. And the mayor’s office vows to keep looking for ways to pull more federal money. One idea is to divert some of the federal dollars already earmarked for transportation that flow into the city annually. For the grousers, that idea — possibly shuttering a number of other needs until a later day — will be like feeding honey to bears. Lots to gnaw on. But for the city’s sake, let’s hope the council sticks to its goal of meeting the 2015 completion date for the starter line. Innovative ways are needed to raise the local dollars (naming rights on the stations!) that will be necessary to get this system up and keep it running. The current situation is decades late and $100 million short. But the blame can’t be placed at Mayor Sly James’ feet, or even with the current council. This administration is simply the cleanup crew on this one. The metro area missed out on the federal funding for such projects a long, long time ago. We’re in catch-up mode now. And James and the current council understand that they can’t waste any more time. So **the new attitude has to be to get it done, however possible.**

#### Virginia Beach residents want HSR

Mike, **Hixenbaugh**, **May 28 2012**, “Residents, city planners suggest light rail to Hilltop”. PilotOnline.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/05/residents-city-planners-suggest-light-rail-hilltop> (added by JA)

Imagine riding a train to shop at Whole Foods, browse through swanky boutiques or dine at some of the area's most upscale restaurants. Long-range **city planners have suggested taking the proposed light-rail line to the popular Hilltop shopping area** - **a new idea that has some City Council members and residents excited**. This would require diverting the line off the former Norfolk Southern right-of-way and up Laskin Road along one of the feeder streets that flank both sides of the busy artery. "Since you're going to be rebuilding Laskin Road in the future to begin with, why not take advantage of all that right-of-way and just put the transit in there?" said Paul Ostergaard, senior vice president for Urban Design Associates. Ostergaard's firm is helping develop a master plan for the Hilltop Strategic Growth Area - one of eight designated areas citywide. The draft plan was unveiled to the council last week. It has been forwarded as well to Hampton Roads Transit to be considered as part of a federal feasibility study on extending The Tide light-rail system from Norfolk into Virginia Beach. City staffers stressed that the idea is contingent upon the city moving forward with light rail. Virginia Beach voters will weigh in on the prospect in an advisory, nonbinding referendum this fall. Initial plans placed the Hilltop light-rail station two miles from the shopping center along the city-owned rail corridor on Potters Road, near Oceana Naval Air Station and across the street from a scrap yard. **Residents who came to public planning meetings instead suggested taking the route directly to the popular shopping center**, said Deborah Zywna, a city planner who coordinated the Hilltop master plan. **"This idea really came from** our **citizens,"** Zywna said. Numerous residents also complained at the planning meetings about the confusing and dangerous traffic patterns caused by the two-way feeder streets that run along either side of Laskin. "For people visiting from out of town, it's terrifying to drive on those frontage roads," Ostergaard said. "This is a much better use." Councilman Jim Wood praised the suggestion, noting it would move the station out of a potential crash zone for Navy jets. "I think it's fair to say it's the Navy's preferred alternative as well," Wood said. **Mayor Will Sessoms** called Hilltop a "calling card" for the city and **said light rail ought to go there.** **Doing so would likely boost ridership and could make light rail more viable**, Councilman John Uhrin said. "We were bypassing certainly one of the most vibrant shopping areas in the city," he said. Four options are being weighed for bringing the line from Laskin Road to the Virginia Beach Convention Center: sending the line south from Laskin along First Colonial Road back to the city-owned railroad right-of-way; taking the trains east along Virginia Beach Boulevard to Birdneck; taking the route east along on I-264 to Birdneck; and continuing the line along Laskin all the way to Birdneck Road. Each of the alternatives will be considered as part of the $6.6 million federal feasibility study, scheduled to be completed next year.

#### HSR met with favorable reviews

**Sparkling Diversity Blog**, **April 9 2012**, “Light Rail is Wanted -- Light Rail is Needed”. Hampton Roads.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/04/light-rail-wanted-light-rail-needed> (added by JA)

How could anyone not want the region to be covered with light rail and the associated bus lines? Since the first day of operation, **Norfolk's light rail has been a rousing success, surpassing all expectations.** Winning over all but the most stubborn detractors. The current light rail runs from EVMS in Norfolk to the Virginia Beach Border on Newtown Road. **It's a start. It needs to grow.** As popular as today's light rail system is, it is only a start. To be truly useful, the light rail tracks must run throughout Hampton Roads. This will happen, undoubtedly, but it will take time. It will take money. **It is a necessary cost to grow the region. We need to continue with the growth of light rail. Each portion of service we implement will add to light rails's worth and popularity. There is no downside to expanding light rail.** Costs will get higher the longer building more track is delayed. It will be built, the question is, now or later? Now is expensive, while later is even more expensive. Along with the implementation of light rail, HRT has tweaked Norfolk's bus routes to join sections of the public transportation more effectively, making it easier to make connections, easier to get where you want, when you want. Routing a trip anywhere in Hampton Roads is as easy as going to the HRT Web Site and entering your departure and arrival points. No computer access? Just phone HRT at 757-222-6100 and your routing questions will be answered**. It is becoming more pleasant and more efficient to use buses and light rail.** I know; I use it. For me it is a choice. **For many it is a necessity.** Bottom line is that **current light rail is being used; it is popular**' it is short. **We need to expand, grow the light rail system** into Virginia Beach **to make it even more popular and make it useful to even more people.** Grow Light Rail, Grow!

## AT: Romney Good

### Pentagon wants to save money, Romney says no

Max, **Rosenthal**. Huffington Post staff writer, **7/19/2012**, “Mitt Romney: 'I Will Not Cut The Military Budget’”. The Huffington Post. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/19/mitt-romney-military-budget_n_1687601.html> (added by JA)

In a week when defense industry leaders gathered in Washington to sound the alarm about potential cuts to defense spending, **Mitt Romney pledged his support for a "military that's second to none" and vowed not to slash the Pentagon's funds. "I will not cut the military budget," he told the American Legion**, which published excerpts on Thursday from an interview with **the presumptive Republican nominee**. "I **will** instead **expand** our essential **weapons programs** **and** our **[number of]** active-duty **personnel**. I do these things not so that we have to fight wars, but so that we can prevent wars." Romney is a longtime critic of cutting the defense budget, arguing that shrinking the numbers of ground troops, planes and ships will damage national security. While **the Pentagon has proposed $487 billion in budget cuts over the next decade, Romney has suggested increasing the military's budget by as much as $2 trillion during the same period**, according to some estimates. Last week, Romney surrogates also made the case that defense cuts will eliminate many jobs, with Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.) saying that President Obama will be responsible for "a huge box of pink slips" if the Pentagon budget keeps being reduced. According to the American Legion, the full interview with Romney will appear in the group's magazine in October.

### Romney pledges to repeal Affordable Care Act

Mitt, **Romney**. Former governor of Massachusetts, Republican presidential candidate, **July 10, 2012**, “Mitt Romney: Repeal Obamacare to Make Way for Real Healthcare Reform”. US News. <http://www.usnews.com/debate-club/should-congress-repeal-the-affordable-care-act/mitt-romney-repeal-obamacare-to-make-way-for-real-healthcare-reform> (added by JA)

Summarizing the failures of President Barack **Obama's** 2,700-page **healthcare bill** in 400 words is no simple task. But here are some of the reasons why it is fatally flawed—and why it **must be repealed**. For starters, the law is driving up costs. President Obama promised to reduce annual premiums by $2,500 per family, but those premiums have actually risen by $2,393, and Obamacare is expected to force them even higher. Those costs don't even tell the whole story. There is a much bigger price tag—and that's what Obamacare is doing to our economy. The law is fiscally reckless and will only add to our nearly $16 trillion in debt. Worse still, it fails to address the long-term drivers of our debt crisis: the rapidly spiraling costs generated by entitlement programs like Medicare and Medicaid. The law is also undermining our economic recovery. Its complexity is causing tremendous uncertainty, and in the coming years, it will raise more than $500 billion in taxes. That's a toxic combination that harms investment and job creation. In fact, in one recent survey, 75 percent of small businesses said Obamacare is making it harder for them to hire. As if Obamacare's fiscal flaws aren't enough, the president has also broken his promise that "if you have insurance that you like, then you will be able to keep that insurance." Instead, his law will force millions of Americans, including seniors, to lose the insurance coverage they have. And Obamacare puts the federal government between patients and their physicians—and empowers bureaucrats to make our healthcare decisions. Take the "Independent Payment Advisory Board" as an example. Through it, 15 unelected bureaucrats will effectively be placed in charge of Medicare—able to make cuts without consent from Congress or those who have paid into the system and rely upon it for their medical care. Everyone agrees that our healthcare system faces significant challenges. The cost of coverage is too high and access to care is too low. But **Obamacare** **does not solve** those **problems**; it will only make them worse. **The law must be repealed so that real reform**—carried out in a transparent manner, consistent with the priorities of the American people, and capable of solving our healthcare challenges—**can finally begin**.

### Speculation rises over Romney’s hidden tax returns

Joseph, **Thorndike**. Director of Tax History Project, July 18th 2012, “Romney Should Release His Tax Returns”. Wall Street Journal Online. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303933704577533250815441464.html> (added by JA)

**Democrats have stepped up their calls for Mitt Romney to release more of his tax returns**, clearly hoping for more embarrassing revelations about his overseas tax shelters or his long relationship with Bain Capital. Thus far, Gov. **Romney has released his 2010 returns** and estimated returns for 2011. But he **has declined to release older ones**.Critics point out that Mr. Romney's father, George, set the standard for candidate tax disclosure when, during the Republican presidential primary campaign in 1967, he released 12 years of tax returns. **President Obama**, for his part, **has released all of his returns since 2000**.Candidates are not required to release their returns; the law protects their tax privacy, just like it does for every other American. Candidates must, however, file a financial-disclosure form with the Federal Election Commission outlining assets and liabilities. Unlike tax returns, which shine a spotlight on income, FEC filings highlight net worth—potentially even more embarrassing for wealthy candidates like Mr. Romney. **Mr. Romney's public tax returns and FEC disclosure suggest that he has a net worth of at least $250 million and** a number of **offshore investments** in well-known **tax havens** like the Cayman Islands and Switzerland—all of which is music to the ears of Democrats hoping to change the focus of the presidential campaign from the latest dismal economic news.But there is no evidence that Mr. Romney violated any tax laws. He simply did what most wealthy Americans do: protecting his wealth by taking advantage of legal loopholes and smart accounting teams. Mr. **Romney would be well advised to simply cough up a decade's worth of returns**. In all likelihood, the only thing he's hiding is more of the sophisticated tax avoidance that he's already demonstrated and that rich people engage in every day. Laudable? No. But not illegal, either.Of course, technical legality won't do much to shield Mr. Romney from his critics. For better or worse, **politicians are held to higher standards**. That might not be fair, strictly speaking, but in any number of spheres, we already expect more from our politicians than simple legality. We have held them to account, for instance, when they have appeared to legally avoid the draft. Both Bill Clinton in 1992 and George W. Bush in 2000 faced tough questions over their draft status during the Vietnam War. Presumably, we would also hold politicians responsible if they routinely ducked jury duty. And we expect them to avoid technically legal but morally dubious activities like excessive gambling or (in certain parts of Nevada) prostitution. **Because something is legal doesn't mean we want our politicians doing it.** Depending on what is in Mr. Romney's unreleased returns, further tax disclosure might be uncomfortable for him or downright deadly. But it won't be nearly as deadly as the weeks of bashing that he can expect from critics if he continues to stonewall on full disclosure. **Mr. Romney should take a lesson from Richard Nixon**, who made one of the earliest candidate disclosures while running for vice president in 1952. "I think you will agree with me," **Nixon** told a nationwide TV audience as he **outlined his personal finances in prime time**, "because, folks, remember, a man that's to be president of the United States, a man that's to be vice president of the United States, must have the confidence of all the people. And that's why I'm doing what I'm doing." So legally, candidates are entitled to their tax privacy. But **politically, privacy is a relic of the past.** We can bemoan that fact and prattle on endlessly about all the great politicians of yore who would never pass the purity test of modern politics. But the fact remains: **21st-century politics make no room for candidate privacy.** And there may be a silver lining to disclosure for Mr. Romney. If he can survive the firestorm of ginned-up outrage that's sure to follow a major release, then a newly inaugurated President Romney might be well positioned to lead the charge for real tax reform. If only an ardent anticommunist like Nixon could go to China, then maybe only a pro-business Republican with lots of experience in legally avoiding taxes can get American taxpayers out of the Caymans.

### Romney ‘would have signed’ indefinite detention bill

Kurt, **Nimmo**. Staff writer for Infowars, January 17 2012, “Romney Would Sign NDAA”. Infowars.

<http://www.infowars.com/romney-would-sign-ndaa/> (JA)

During the latest “debate” in South Carolina, **Mitt Romney said that if he were president he would sign the National Defense Authorization Act**. Prior to his recent assertion that it is perfectly normal to dispense with the Fourth Amendment and suspend habeas corpus, Romney said he wasn’t up to speed on the law and promised to post an analysis on his website, which he never did. **Romney said you don’t have the “right to join a group that has challenged America”** and then mentioned al-Qaeda, the terror group that the FBI admits poses little threat to the nation. The NDAA, however, is not about indefinitely detaining Muslim cave dwellers. It’s about disappearing American citizens who oppose the bankster cartel now in control of the government. **The law is a “violent and sudden usurpation” of the Constitution** of the sort James Madison warned about. The founders considered habeas corpus the most fundamental of rights because it insured that the executive branch could not hold people without cause. It was so important the founders included it in Article 1, Section 9, Clause 2 of the Constitution. In the years after Truman’s warning**, the government slowly chipped away at the Fourth Amendment and habeas corpus as it passed the McCartney-Walter Act, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act** (following the Oklahoma false flag)**, the Patriot Act** (following the 9/11 false flag), **and has finally repealed the cornerstone of the Bill of Rights with the passage of the NDAA.** As Sherwood Ross notes, **with the passage of the NDAA, we have returned “to the disgraceful** Korematsu **Era, when President Roosevelt ordered the military to round up law-abiding Japanese-American citizens and stick them in concentration camps** for the duration of World War II.” World War II, however, had an end, whereas the bogus war on terrorism is designed to last forever, as our leaders have stated on a number of occasions. **Romney has no opinion on the Constitution, Magna Carta, and centuries of common law**. He is an empty vessel filled up with nonsense produced by the global elite who run the disgusting dog and pony shows that now pass as elections in the United States. The ruling elite behind the curtain have worked slowly and methodically to dismantle the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It stands in the way of their plan to implement world government and a global banking and economic system. **Habeas corpus is a thorn in the side that prevents** them from sending out **the military to disappear those of us opposed to** their plan for **a global totalitarian future now under construction. They now have that power.**

### Animal cruelty questions continue to dog Romney

Aliyah, **Shalid**. NY Daily News writer, April 17 2012, “Ann Romney defends Mitt strapping dog to roof of car: Pooch ‘loved’ it”. NY Daily News. <http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-04-17/news/31357093_1_ann-romney-family-dog-mitt-romney> (JA)

Seamus Romney absolutely “loved” his wild rooftop rides, at least according to his mom. Ann **Romney** opened up about their **family dog**, who **was strapped to the roof of their car in a crate during vacations** in the 1980s — insisting the pet pooch looked forward to the trips **despite** once **getting sick.** Her husband, likely Republican presidential nominee **Mitt Romney, has come under fire from animal activist groups** after he revealed how the long-deceased Irish setter traveled with the family. The left has used the trips to paint the White House hopeful as uncaring. "The dog loved it," Ann Romney told ABC's Diane Sawyer on Monday. "He would see that crate and, you know, he would, like, go crazy because he was going with us on vacation. It was to me a kinder thing to bring him along than to leave him in the kennel for two weeks." Ann **Romney confirmed the details** of one of Seamus' trips that has come **under particular scrutiny — a 12-hour drive from Boston to Canada in 1983.** **During the ride, the dog got sick and defecated all over himself and the windshield of the car**. That promoted the former Massachusetts governor to get out of the vehicle and hose it down before putting the canine back on the roof for the rest of the trip. She said the dog got sick only "once" and it was because he ate turkey off the counter. Mitt Romney said during the interview that the attacks surrounding his dog were the most "wounding" so far on the campaign trial. **Asked if he'd do it again, he replied, "Certainly not with the attention it's received."**

### Nuclear war with Iran guaranteed if Romney is president

Scott, **Baldauf**. Staff writer, **January 4 2012**, “Bomb Iran? Where Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum stand.” Christian Science Monitor. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-News/2012/0104/Bomb-Iran-Where-Mitt-Romney-and-Rick-Santorum-stand> (JA)

Republican candidates Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum emerged as the twin frontrunners after the Iowa caucuses on Tuesday, and this is likely to have interesting reverberations for Iran. Why Iran? Because both former Gov. **Romney and** former Sen. **Santorum are hard critics of the Obama administration’s handling of the country** that Romney sees as America’s largest threat. **Both men have said they would bomb Iran if that country developed nuclear weapons. Both believe that Obama’s efforts to negotiate with Iran sends a signal of weakness**. And if one of these men emerges as the Republican candidate to go up against Obama, the Republican party will attempt to play to what it regards as its strength – security and foreign policy – and **the rhetoric against Iran is only likely to grow sharper**. (Editor's note: An earlier version of this story misstated that Iran had a declared nuclear weapons program.) Obama’s approach to Iran, of course, is shaped by his campaign promise to abandon the unilateralism of the Bush administration, and to work closely with America’s allies to deal with mutual threats, using methods short of war. While the US took the lead in dealing with supposed threats in Iraq – launching the war promising to go after Saddam Hussein’s alleged “weapons of mass destruction” – **Europe has taken the lead in dealing with Iran through “critical dialogue” and reminding Iran of its promises to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.** Most of **the Republican candidates portray this** carrot-and-stick approach **as weakness, and call for military options.** To be sure, Texas Rep. Ron Paul's strong third place showing in Iowa showed there is some diversity of opinion among GOP voters.The Congressman argues for rolling back US military commitments around the globe and has warned about the costs of starting new conflicts, particularly with Iran. But Paul's views on Iran have prompted strong rebukes from other Republican candidates who hope to also use the issue against Obama. Romney, who officially won the Iowa caucuses with a mere eight votes (with 30,015 votes against Santorum’s 30,007), has long been critical of Obama’s policy toward Iran, but since launching his presidential campaign, he has become a veritable hawk. During the Iowa campaign, **Romney called Obama's efforts against Iran a failure.** "I want to make sure that the people of this nation understand that he failed us not only here at home, he's failed us in dealing with the greatest threat we face, which comes from Iran.” During his first run for the presidency, in 2007, Romney managed to make the bombing of Iran sound like a somewhat middle-of-the road option. “I don’t anticipate that the kind of strategy we would pursue would be a ground-intensive, change-the-regime, change-the-government type of effort. I think it’s more likely that other military actions would be in the nature of blockade or a bombardment or surgical strikes of one kind or another.” More recently, in debates, **he has called on Obama “to impose crippling economic sanctions on the Iranian regime, support the Iranian dissidents, and convey through actions** – not just words – **that the military option is very real and very credible**.” Santorum, by contrast, has been unequivocal: he would bomb Iran to stop the Islamic Republic’s nuclear weapons program. In a lengthy interview on Meet the Press over the weekend, Santorum criticized Obama’s attempt at negotiating with the Iranians, and called for increased covert sabotage, bombings, and even arresting foreign scientists traveling to Iran to assist the Iranian nuclear weapons program, and “treating them like Al Qaeda.” "I would be saying to the Iranians, you either open up those facilities, you begin to dismantle them and, and make them available to inspectors, or we will degrade those facilities through airstrikes and make it very public that we are doing that. **If the intention of all this muscle-flexing was to encourage Iran to step down from its nuclear program, it hasn’t worked**. On Jan. 2, **Tehran announced that it had produced the nation’s first nuclear fuel rod**, a sign that its indigenous **nuclear scientists had the technical capabilities to complete** all **the** steps in the **entire nuclear fuel cycle**. Nuclear fuel rods are composed of pellets of enriched uranium, and are used in nuclear reactors, but some nuclear scientists fret that Iran may be using its peaceful nuclear energy program as a cover for a nuclear weapons program. **Tehran also announced that it had launched a new medium range missile**, during a naval drill in the Persian Gulf. Iran says **the new missile is designed to evade radar.** And if the US hoped that its close relations with some of Iran's regional neighbors might give it the kind of leverage to encourage better behavior from Iran, that door seems to be closed as well. Sumit Ganguly, an expert on Indian foreign policy at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, and member of the Council on Foreign Relations, says that India would likely remain neutral rather than succumb to US pressure and oppose Iran's development of nuclear weapons. India will still avoid taking sides. The inherent caution that seems to characterise Indian foreign policy is most likely to prevail. The Indians will try to have it both ways. We will say **peaceful resolution of this impending crisis is in the interest of all parties**; we enjoin both the United States and Iran to avoid escalation which could contribute to violence. I can virtually write the press communiqué that will emanate from [India's foreign office in] South Block.

### Romney fought against counseling for at-risk LGBT teens

Amanda, **Terkel**. Senior Political Reporter, **5/10/2012**, “Mitt Romney Bullied LGBT Youth Commission As Governor.” Huffington Post. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/10/mitt-romney-bullied-lgbt-youth-commission_n_1506231.html> (JA)

WASHINGTON -- Just hours after the Washington Post published a piece on Mitt Romney's prep school pranks -- which included forcibly cutting the hair of a student who stood out for his nonconformity and his perceived homosexuality -- the presumptive Republican presidential nominee had already apologized in a radio interview, saying he was sorry for any "dumb things" he might have done "a long time ago." Presumably, **by the time Romney was elected governor of Massachusetts** in 2002, **he had moved on from verbal taunts and physical take-downs**. But **gay-rights advocates argue that his policies toward the LGBT community as governor were just as troubling**. **"It's very clear that Mr. Romney doesn't get it," said Eliza Byard, executive director of the** Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (**GLSEN**), **which focuses on supporting LGBT youth**. "Bullying, harassment and assault in schools are serious issues. His own behavior was deeply troubling when he was a student, and **his actions as governor of Massachusetts were also an assault on** the **LGBT students** that the state had set out to protect." "Just looking at his current behavior, he's so politically opportunistic in his willingness to score political points on the backs of LGBT people -- if that's not the definition of a bully, I don't know what is," said Kara Suffredini, executive director of the pro-gay rights group MassEquality. The Romney campaign did not return a request for comment. Most memorable for Suffredini and Byard were Romney's battles with a commission meant to help LGBT youth, as it became clearer that these students were targets of harassment and discrimination in schools. The Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth was first set up in 1992 by then-governor William Weld, a Republican. On May 12, 2006, the Boston Globe described what happened: “Angered that his name appeared on a press release touting a gay pride parade, **Governor Mitt Romney moved** yesterday **to curtail the activities of a** 14-year-old **advisory commission on gay and lesbian youth**. The commission chairwoman, Kathleen M. Henry, said she was called yesterday by Beth Myers, the governor's chief of staff, who told her that the governor planned to issue an executive order ''revoking our existence" and creating another youth commission whose purview would be all of the state's youth, not just gays and lesbians. The commission would have all new members, she said.” A few hours later, however, Romney had changed his mind. His spokesman, Eric Fehrnstrom, said at the time that the governor had decided the original proposal was "too harsh." Instead, **he** opted to **put restrictions on the way the commission could use the** approximately **$1.2 million it received in state funds.** State Rep. Liz Malia (D-Brighton), a defender of the commission, told the Globe at the time that she had met with Fehrnstrom about the issue. He had told her that **he wanted to take it in a direction that focused on "all youth, and not gay and lesbian youth,"** she said. **The** governor's **restrictions alarmed LGBT activists and allies**, who sought to make the commission independent. The legislature passed a bill establishing a separate, independent commission comprised of the same members a couple of months later. Romney vetoed that bill, but the legislature overrode him. As a response, he disbanded the governor's commission in an executive order, since it had essentially become a duplicate. The commission continues today, distinct from the governor's office. Byard told The Huffington Post that **GLSEN**'s Massachusetts chapter **was consistently frustrated with Romney's cuts to funding for programs that assisted LGBT youth.** As research by the Democratic group American Bridge 21st Century shows, many of these areas did see their funding cut under Romney. On Nov. 15, 2006, for example, the Boston Herald noted that **Romney had cut funds for "HIV/AIDS prevention**, matching grants for groups like the YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs and domestic violence prevention in the gay community." It was part of the governor's $425 million emergency state spending freeze. Earlier in the year, **Romney** had **vetoed** $158,000 in **funding for "intervention services and crisis housing for sexual violence in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community."** As the Patriot Ledger reported on July 22, 2006, the Democratic-controlled state legislature overrode his veto. In both 2003 and 2004, **he vetoed funding for** a "statewide and community based suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and surveillance activities and **the implementation of a statewide suicide prevention plan,"** according to government documents. Romney said the funding was not consistent with his recommendation to the legislature. The state House and Senate eventually overrode that veto as well. Byard said she found Romney's apology on Wednesday insufficient. In a radio interview with Fox News host Brian Kilmeade, Romney stated that he didn't realize one of the classmates he picked on was gay. According to the Washington Post article, Romney would say "Atta girl!" when the student would try to speak in English class. "Whether or not Mr. Romney knew or thought he knew this other person was actually gay -- which it turned out he was -- is pretty beside the point," said Byard. "It was troubling behavior then. His actions as governor, and his actions as a candidate today in apologizing, all seem pretty clearly part of a troubling pattern of disregard for the seriousness of this issue and the kinds of behaviors that he himself is accused of carrying out." In the past few years, **there have been a rash of suicides by teenagers who have been bullied for being gay** or perceived as gay. In 2009, GLSEN surveyed 7,261 middle and high school students and "found that at school nearly **9 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school** in the past year and nearly **two-thirds felt unsafe** because of their sexual orientation. Nearly **a third of LGBT students skipped at least one day of school in the past month because of safety concerns."**

### Mitt Romney lacks clear vision for Afghanistan

Ben, **Armbruster**. National Security Editor for ThinkProgress.org, **July 19 2012**, “Romney Adviser Stumped When Asked For Specifics Of Romney’s Afghanistan Policy.” ThinkProgress. <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/07/19/547931/romney-adviser-stumped-when-asked-for-specifics-of-romneys-afghanistan-policy/?mobile=nc> (JA)

Amid charges that **Mitt Romney’s Afghanistan policy is**, as Foreign Policy recently put it, “**unclear and confusing**,” Romney campaign adviser Tara Wall on MSNBC this morning could not provide any details on what presumptive GOP presidential nominee plans to do about the war there should he become president. Noting that Romney is about to embark on a short trip abroad later this month, host Luke Russert relayed a recent report that two **top Republican senators couldn’t explain Romney’s Afghanistan policy** and wondered if **he has to be more specific**. At first, Wall appeared confused, eventually saying — and in keeping with the Romney campaign’s reported policy — she didn’t want to “get into the details” and then tried to shift the conversation back to the economy: RUSSERT: He was asked by the media what Mr. Romney’s Afghanistan policy [is] and he goes, “What is it?” a Romney supporter and senior member of the Armed Services Committee said. “I think [Romney's policy is] ‘listen to the commanders’ and if it’s that, that’s OK with me.” **Does Mitt Romney have** to have **a more specific policy in Afghanistan** prior to going on to this trip? WALL: Well, you know, look, I think that overall — [pause] — overall, Gov. Romney has been clear about his plans and about this trip and about what his goals are and I think that when you look at protecting and securing the homeland, I think that that is, that’s something that he has articulated over and over again. I’m not going to get into the details of that, I’m here to talk about, again, once again, the job situation, the economy, growth that we need and what this governor is planning on doing in that regard. Perhaps Wall was confused about Romney’s Afghanistan policy because **it is indeed very confusing**. As **the Washington Post** reported late last year, **Romney “has not explained what he thinks the U.S. mission in Afghanistan is at this point and what would constitute success.”** When Foreign Policy asked Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) last week what he thought Romney’s Afghanistan policy is, the Arizona Republican was equally bemused. “You would have to tell me what exactly you mean by ‘his policy.’ That’s a long discussion that I don’t want to get into,” he said.

### Romney will abandon Palestinian people

Mitt, **Romney**. Republican candidate for President, **2012**, “Israel.” Mitt Romney 2012. <http://www.mittromney.com/issues/israel> (JA)

**Israel is the United States’ closest ally in the Middle East** and a beacon of democracy and freedom in the region. The tumult in the Middle East has heightened Israel’s security problems. Indeed, this is an especially dangerous moment for the Jewish state. It has deteriorating relationships with Turkey and Egypt. It faces longstanding dangers from Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, a violent and highly unstable Syria, and a nuclear-aspiring Iran whose leadership is openly calling for Israel’s annihilation. President Obama and his administration have badly misunderstood the dynamics of the region. Instead of fostering stability and security, they have diminished U.S. authority and painted both Israel and ourselves into a corner. President Obama for too long has been in the grip of several illusions. One is that the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is the central problem in the region. This has been disproved repeatedly by events, most recently and most dramatically by the eruption of the Arab Spring. But it nonetheless led the administration to believe that distancing the United States from Israel was a smart move that would earn us credits in the Arab world and somehow bring peace closer. The record proves otherwise. The key to negotiating a lasting peace is an Israel that knows it will be secure.The administration’s errors extend in other directions as well. President **Obama has repeatedly** and unilaterally **created new preconditions for restarting peace talks**. The result has been to encourage Palestinians simply to hold out and wait for Washington to deliver more Israeli concessions on a silver platter. Why, after all, should the Palestinians even negotiate with Israel if the White House is pressuring Israel without extracting any price from the Palestinians in return? To ensure Israel’s security, Mitt **Romney will work closely with Israel to maintain its strategic military edge**. The United States will work intensively with Turkey and Egypt to shore up the now fraying relationships with Israel that have underpinned peace in the Middle East for decades. The **United States must forcefully resist the emergence of anti-Israel policies** in Turkey and Egypt, and work to make clear that their interests are not served by isolating Israel. With regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Mitt’s policy will differ sharply from President Obama’s. As president, Mitt will reject any measure that would frustrate direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. He will make clear to the Palestinians that the unilateral attempt to decide issues that are designated for final negotiations by the Oslo Accords is unacceptable. **The United States will reduce assistance to the Palestinians** if they continue to pursue United Nations recognition or form a unity government that includes Hamas, a terrorist group dedicated to Israel’s destruction. The United States needs a president who will not be a fair-weather friend of Israel. The United States must work as a country to resist the worldwide campaign to delegitimize Israel. We must fight against that campaign in every forum and label it the anti-Semitic poison that it is. Israel’s existence as a Jewish state is not up for debate.

### Romney will increase US-China tensions

Mitt, **Romney**. Republican candidate for President, **2012**, “China.” Mitt Romney 2012. http://www.mittromney.com/issues/china-east-asia (JA)

In 2010, after 30 years of dramatic growth, China surpassed Japan to become the world’s second largest economy after ours. China’s size in land and in population, its rapid economic growth, and its sharply increasing military expenditures are dramatically changing the strategic map of the world. While **the potential for conflict with an authoritarian China could rise as its power grows**, the United States must pursue policies designed to encourage Beijing to embark on a course that makes conflict less likely. **China must be discouraged from attempting to intimidate or dominate neighboring states**. If the present Chinese regime is permitted to establish itself as the preponderant power in the Western Pacific it could close off large parts of the region to cooperative relations with the United States and the West and dim hope that economic opportunity and democratic freedom will continue to flourish across East Asia. Mitt **Romney will implement a strategy that makes** the path of **regional hegemony for China far more costly** than the alternative path of **becoming a responsible partner in the international system.** **In the face of China’s accelerated military build-up, the** **United States and our allies must maintain appropriate military capabilities** to discourage any aggressive or coercive behavior by China against its neighbors. Maintaining a strong military presence in the Pacific is not an invitation to conflict. Quite the contrary; it is a guarantor of a region where trade routes are open and East Asia’s community of nations remains secure and prosperous. Toward that end, **the United States should maintain and expand its naval presence in the Western Pacific**. We should be assisting partners that require help to enhance their defensive capabilities. **The Department of Defense should reconsider recent decisions not to sell top-of-the-line equipment to our closest Asian allies**. **We should be coordinating with Taiwan to determine its military needs and supplying them with** adequate **aircraft and other military platforms**. **We should be assisting Pacific nations to** enhance maritime domain awareness, i.e., the ability to **employ radar and other detection networks to monitor** aggressive behavior in **disputed waters**. This would minimize the chance of surprise confrontations and prevent military miscalculations that can escalate into larger conflicts. We need to continue to strengthen alliances and relations with strategic partners like India and build stronger ties to influential countries like Indonesia. Our aim should be to work with all these countries bilaterally but also to encourage them to work with one another as they have begun to do. **Our objective is** not to build an anti-China coalition. Rather it is **to strengthen cooperation among countries with which we share a concern about China’s growing power and increasing assertiveness** and with whom we also share an interest in maintaining freedom of navigation and ensuring that disputes over resources are resolved by peaceful means. **It is yet another way of closing off China’s** option of **expanding its influence** through coercion. As detailed in his book, Believe in America, Mitt Romney will also pursue deeper economic cooperation among like-minded nations around the world that are genuinely committed to the principles of open markets through the formation of a “Reagan Economic Zone.” The benefits of this zone — which will codify principles of free trade — will be a powerful magnet that draws in an expanding circle of nations seeking greater access to other markets. Although China is unlikely to accede to the Reagan Economic Zone given its current approach to trade, offering Beijing the possibility of participation will give China significant incentives to end its abusive commercial practices. But with or without China as a member, the Reagan Economic Zone will establish a system of trade that could knit together the entire region, discouraging imbalanced bilateral trade relations between China and its neighbors, limiting China’s ability to coerce other countries, and ultimately encouraging China to participate in free trade on fair terms. Any serious **U.S. policy toward China must confront the fact that China’s regime continues to deny its people basic political freedoms and human rights**. **A nation that represses its own people** **cannot be a trusted partner in an international system based on economic and political freedom**. While it is obvious that any lasting democratic reform in China cannot be imposed from the outside, it is equally obvious that the Chinese people currently do not yet enjoy the requisite civil and political rights to turn internal dissent into effective reform. **The** **United States has an important role to play in encouraging the evolution of China** toward a more politically open and democratic order. If the United States fails to support dissidents out of fear of offending the Chinese government, we will merely embolden China’s leaders. We certainly should not have relegated the future of freedom to second or third place, as Secretary of State Clinton did in 2009 when she publicly declared that the Obama administration would not let U.S. concerns about China’s human rights record interfere with cooperation “on the global economic crisis [and] the global climate change crisis.” A Romney administration will vigorously support and engage civil society groups within China that are promoting democratic reform, anti-corruption efforts, religious freedom, and women’s and minority rights. It will look to provide these groups and the Chinese people with greater access to information and communication through a stronger Internet freedom initiative. Mitt **Romney will seek to engage China**, but will always stand up for those fighting for the freedoms we enjoy.

## Ozone Advantage

#### **Because of the Montreal Protocol, the ozone layer is in recovery.**

Axel Bojanowski, graduate geologist, editor of Science Editor, 03/16/2012, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/scientific-report-confirms-reduced-uv-ray-exposures-a-821822.html>, JJM^\_^

The sustained damage to the ozone layer had been caused by aerosol spray cans and refrigerators emitting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). In 1987, the United Nations responded, banning the manufacture and use of CFCs and other substances under the Montreal Protocol. Since then, the hole in the ozone layer has been shrinking.¶ In autumn 2010, scientists reported the first success, saying the ozone layer had begun to heal. Now a new study shows for the first time that the healing of the ozone layer is also actually improving the health situation for people. Carcinogenic UV rays on the ground have also been diminishing in recent years, researchers led by Christos Zerefos at the Research Centers for Atmospheric Physics and Climatology at the Academy of Athens in Greece conclude in their study, published by the scientific publication Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics.¶ "The results are encouraging," said Markus Rex, a respected ozone expert at Germany's Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in Potsdam. The fact that the ozone layer in the regions researched has become thicker is a result of the successful Montreal Protocol, he added

#### **UV Rays destroy fish harvest and crop yields.**

 Holt, Rinehart and Winston., no date, <http://www.nexuslearning.net/books/Holt_Env_Science/13-2.pdf>, JJM^\_^

High levels of¶ UV light can kill single-celled organisms called phytoplankton¶ that live near the surface of the ocean. The loss of phytoplankton¶ could disrupt ocean food chains and reduce fish harvests. In addition, a reduction in the number of phytoplankton would cause an¶ increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.¶ Some scientists believe that increased UV light could be especially damaging for amphibians, such as toads and salamanders.¶ Amphibians lay eggs that lack shells in the shallow water of¶ ponds and streams. UV light at natural levels kills many eggs of¶ some species by damaging unprotected DNA. Higher UV levels¶ might kill more eggs and put amphibian populations at risk.¶ Ecologists often use the health of amphibian populations as an¶ indicator of environmental change due to the environmental sensitivity of these creatures.¶ UV light can damage plants by interfering with photosynthesis. This damage can result in lower crop yields

#### **Ozone depletion causes UV rays, destroys crop yield and create a global famine.**

<http://www.bcairquality.ca/101/ozone-depletion-impacts.html>, no date, Effects of Ozone depletion, JJM^\_^

Stratospheric ozone filters out most of the sun's potentially harmful shortwave ultraviolet (UV) radiation. If this ozone becomes depleted, then more UV rays will reach the earth. Exposure to higher amounts of UV radiation could have serious impacts on human beings, animals and plants, such as the following: Several of the world's major crop species are particularly vulnerable to increased UV, resulting in reduced growth, photosynthesis and flowering. These species include wheat, rice, barley, oats, corn, soybeans, peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, cauliflower, broccoli and carrots. The effect of ozone depletion on the Canadian agricultural sector could be significant.

Only a few commercially important trees have been tested for UV (UV-B) sensitivity, but early results suggest that plant growth, especially in seedlings, is harmed by more intense UV radiation.

#### **Ozone depletion causes cancer, blindness and suppresses the immune system.**

http://www.bcairquality.ca/101/ozone-depletion-impacts.html, no date, Effects of Ozone depletion, JJM^\_^

Stratospheric ozone filters out most of the sun's potentially harmful shortwave ultraviolet (UV) radiation. If this ozone becomes depleted, then more UV rays will reach the earth. Exposure to higher amounts of UV radiation could have serious impacts on human beings, animals and plants, ssuch a the following:¶ More skin cancers, sunburns and premature aging of the skin.¶ More cataracts, blindness and other eye diseases: UV radiation can damage several parts of the eye, including the lens, cornea, retina and conjunctiva.¶ Cataracts (a clouding of the lens) are the major cause of blindness in the world. A sustained 10% thinning of the ozone layer is expected to result in almost two million new cases of cataracts per year, globally (Environment Canada, 1993).¶ Weakening of the human immune system (immunosuppression). Early findings suggest that too much UV radiation can suppress the human immune system, which may play a role in the development of skin cancer.

#### **Ozone depletion destroys biodiversity in ocean. Kills fishing industry.**

http://www.bcairquality.ca/101/ozone-depletion-impacts.html, no date, Effects of Ozone depletion, JJM^\_^

Stratospheric ozone filters out most of the sun's potentially harmful shortwave ultraviolet (UV) radiation. If this ozone becomes depleted, then more UV rays will reach the earth. Exposure to higher amounts of UV radiation could have serious impacts on human beings, animals and plants, such as the following:In particular, plankton (tiny organisms in the surface layer of oceans) are threatened by increased UV radiation. Plankton are the first vital step in aquatic food chains.¶ Decreases in plankton could disrupt the fresh and saltwater food chains, and lead to a species shift in Canadian waters.¶ Loss of biodiversity in our oceans, rivers and lakes could reduce fish yields for commercial and sport fisheries.

#### **Cancer causes human extinction.**

A.V. **Turchin**, Science writer, no date, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/52440799/Worst-Case-Scenario-of-Nuclear-Accidents-human-extinction>, JJM^\_^

Radiation can lead to the extinction of humans in several ways, in order of decreasing doses:1) Death from acute radiation sickness (1000 rem per week)2) Death due to prolonged exposure (10 years), high doses of radiation (100rem/year), the consumption of contaminated foods. The internal effects of radiationare 10 times stronger than external training, and beta emitters are dangerous onlywhen eaten. Causes: cancer, weakened immunity and premature aging.3) Sterility.4) The increased level of mutations leading to the total genetic degradationover several generations.

### **Global famine leads to insecurity and extinction.**

Adam Wasserman**,** Contributing Writer, Nov 18, 2008,<http://suite101.com/article/understanding-the-global-famine-a79124>, JJM^\_^

Since foreign exchange is necessary for debt payments, Third World nations are forced to export their emergency grain stores in order to obtain the hard greenback currency to pay the international creditors. These emergency grain reserves are necessary in case of a failed crop or increased prices unaffordable to the general population. Thus even during a famine, a nation may still produce far over their usual sustenance levels.¶ This severely undermines national food security and increases the vulnerability of the population to price fluctuations on commodities. As a result of these structural measures enforced by international creditor institutions, the sharp rise in food prices has recently threatened the existence of most of the world’s population.¶ Read more at Suite101: Understanding the Global Famine: How Corporate Agriculture Has Undermined Food Security and Stability | Suite101.com <http://suite101.com/article/understanding-the-global-famine-a79124#ixzz21DC2V5sJ>

### **Even Al Gore agrees, HSR solves economy. , energy security and environment.**

Al Gore, qualifications:P, “the central organizing principle for civilization, 1992, <http://www.issues2000.org/celeb/Al_Gore_Environment.htm>, JJM^\_^

Q: Should the federal government be spending more to help Amtrak expand intercity rail travel and develop high-speed corridors??¶ A: With growing congestion on our highways and airports, it’s time to give the American people a fast and efficient alternative for traveling between our communities. High-speed rail reduces highway and airport congestion, improves air quality, stimulates the economy, and broadens the scope of personal choice for traveling between our communities. That is why, as part of my Energy Security and Environment Trust Fund, I am proposing a major commitment to build high-speed rail systems in major transportation corridors across the nation. As president, I will fight for new grants to Amtrak and the states for improving and expanding passenger rail routes and corridors. And I will work to secure funding to help communities improve rail stations - to help rebuild these vital economic centers in cities and small towns across America.

### Private and public partnerships solve HSR and double solvency.

Tony Dutzik and Jordan Schneider, Frontier Group¶ Phineas Baxandall, U.S. PIRG Education Fund, U.S. PIRG Education Fund, 2011, http://cdn.publicinterestnetwork.org/assets/85a40b6572e20834e07b0da3e66e98bf/HSR-PPP-USPIRG-July-19-2011.pdf,JJM^\_^

Public-private partnerships will ¶ likely be part of the development of ¶ high-speed rail in the United States. ¶ • High-speed rail systems require billions of dollars in financial capital, ¶ which cash-strapped state and federal governments are likely to seek ¶ through partnerships with the private ¶ sector. ¶ • California is moving forward with the ¶ creation of the nation’s first true highspeed rail system, and it is required ¶ by ballot initiative to obtain private ¶ investment in the project.¶ • Amtrak is seeking to involve private ¶ investors in its plan to bring true ¶ high-speed rail service to the busy ¶ Northeast Corridor.¶ • The U.S. Department of Transportation has signaled that private investment will play a key role in achieving.

#### **Ozone layer being destroyed now.**

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission ¶ January 2003, <http://www.policyalmanac.org/environment/archive/ozone.shtml>, JJM ^\_^

Ozone occurs naturally in the stratosphere and is produced and destroyed at a constant rate. But this "good" ozone is gradually being destroyed by manmade chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and other ozone depleting substances (used in coolants, foaming agents, fire extinguishers, and solvents). These ozone depleting substances degrade slowly and can remain intact for many years as they move through the troposphere until they reach the stratosphere. There they are broken down by the intensity of the sun's ultraviolet rays and release chlorine and bromine molecules, which destroy "good" ozone. One chlorine or bromine molecule can destroy 100,000 ozone molecules, causing ozone to disappear much faster than nature can replace i

## Urban Sprawl Advantage

### Urban Sprawl is bad and effects the United States and the world

**UN Habitat**, department of the United Nations dedicated to the state of the world’s cities, March 18th, **2010**, “Urban Trends: Urban Sprawl Now a Global Problem”, UN Habitat Foundation, <http://www.unhabitat.org/documents/SOWC10/R4.pdf>

Urban sprawl, a trend long associated with North American cities, is fast engulﬁng many developing countries where real estate developers are pushing a “world class lifestyle”. In its report, State of the World Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide, UN-HABITAT says research into urban sprawl in the Mexican city of Guadalajara is a good example: Between 1970 and 2000 the surface area of the city grew 1.5 times faster than the population. The same is true for cities in China; Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar; Johannesburg, South Africa’s largest commercial hub and the capitals of Egypt and Mexico, Cairo and Mexico City respectively. In many developing countries, urban sprawl comprises two main, contrasting types of development in the same city: one is characterized by large peri-urban areas with informal and illegal patterns of land use. This is combined with a lack of infrastructure, public facilities and basic services, and often is accompanied by little or no public transport and by inadequate access roads. The other is a form of “suburban sprawl” in which residential zones for high- and middle-income groups and highly-valued commercial and retail complexes are well-connected by individual rather than public transport. Urban sprawl adds to the urban divide, pushing social segregation along economic lines that result in spatial difference in wealth and quality of life across various parts of cities and metropolitan areas run down inner cities and more suburbs. Suburbanization in developing countries happens mainly because people – rich and poor – ﬂee poor governance, lack of planning and poor access to amenities. “In a nutshell: sprawl is a symptom of a divided city,” the report says. Urban sprawl involving the poor occurs because authorities pay little attention to slums, land, services and transport. Authorities lack the ability to predict urban growth and, as a result, fail to provide land for the urbanizing poor. In addition, the urban poor are denied land rights which is one of the main factors driving people to the periphery of towns, associated with urban sprawl in developing countries. Other features typically associated with sprawl include overdependence on personal motorized transport coupled with a lack of alternatives, limited housing options and urban spaces that discourage pedestrian trafﬁc. Most South African cities are an example of this. They are expanding primarily through development of new housing areas which, being located beyond the existing urban periphery, are relatively unplanned. As a result, the urban periphery consists of pockets of housing developments that are isolated and separated from each other by trunk roads or open spaces. OUTCOME OF SPRAWL Urban sprawl has a negative impact on infrastructure and the sustainability of cities. In most cases, sprawl translates to an increase in the cost of transport, public infrastructure and of residential and commercial development. Moreover, sprawling metropolitan areas require more energy, metal, concrete and asphalt than do compact cities because homes, ofﬁces and utilities are set farther apart. In many places, urban sprawl encourages new developments that cause signiﬁcant loss of prime farmland. When cities are improperly planned urban sprawl also adds to environmental degradation. Such is the case around several cities in Latin America where sizeable damage has been caused to environmentally sensitive areas. These include Panama City (Panama) and its surrounding Canal Zone, Caracas (Venezuela) and its adjacent coastline, San José de Costa Rica and its mountainous area and São Paulo (Brazil) and its water basins. Sprawl also creates ﬁscal problems for cities, as it takes place outside of urban administrative boundaries. While suburban municipalities receive tax income with more development, it is the central cities or downtown municipalities that pay for most of the daytime services to suburban residents.

### **Urban Sprawl is unsustainable and bad for the environment and econ**

UPI.com (United Press International), March 27th, 2012, “Problems of urban sprawl discussed”, United Press International Science News, <http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2012/03/27/Problems-of-urban-sprawl-discussed/UPI-51621332887950/>

Humanity's urban footprint on Earth will expand by an area equal to France, Germany and Spain combined in less than 20 years, researchers say. That ongoing pattern of urban sprawl puts humanity at severe risk due of environmental problems, scientists at the "Planet Under Pressure" scientific conference in London were told, but "options and opportunities" are possible, researchers said. Reforms in existing cities and better planning of new ones offer disproportionately large environmental benefits compared with other options, Shobhakar Dhakal of the Tokyo-based Global Carbon Project told the conference attendees. "Re-engineering cities is urgently needed for global sustainability," Dhakal, said, noting emerging urban areas "have a latecomer's advantage in terms of knowledge, sustainability thinking, and technology to better manage such fundamentals as trash and transportation." "Our focus should be on enhancing the quality of urbanization -- from urban space, infrastructure, form and function, to lifestyle, energy choices and efficiency." Failure to do so risks unwelcome potential problems of dense urbanization including congestion, pollution, crime, the rapid spread of infectious disease and other societal problems, he said. Other researchers agreed. "The way cities have grown since World War II is neither socially or environmentally sustainable and the environmental cost of ongoing urban sprawl is too great to continue," Karen Seto of Yale University said.

### Urban Sprawl bad for Energy sources, Economy, Society and Environment

**CWAC**.net (Clean Water Action Council), certified environmental council, **No Date**, “Land Use and Urban Sprawl”, Clean Water Action Council, <http://www.cwac.net/landuse/index.html>

Land Use & Urban Sprawl Land use and urban sprawl are major environmental concerns affecting us in a variety of ways. We must adopt sustainable patterns of development which are not self-destructive. What is Urban Sprawl? "Sprawl" is the increased use of urbanized land by fewer people than in the past. Traditional cities were compact and efficient, but over the past 30-50 years, the density of land used per person has declined drastically. Although the U.S. population grew by 17 percent from 1982 to 1997, urbanized land increased by 47 percent during the same 15 year period. The developed acreage per person has nearly doubled in the past 20 years, and housing lots larger than 10 acres have accounted for 55 percent of land developed since 1994, according to the American Farmland Trust. Land use and urban sprawl are major environmental concerns affecting us in a variety of ways. We must adopt sustainable patterns of development which are not self-destructive. Impacts of Sprawl Land Use and Urban Sprawl Between 1950 and 2002, the number of acres of farmland in Wisconsin dropped by 32.6%, from 23.6 million acres down to 15.9 million. 1. Loss of Farmland --- We're chewing up farms at an alarming rate across the U.S., to create new highways, fringe industrial parks and sprawled housing developments. This loss reduces our ability to grow food, fiber and timber. In many areas, urban development pressure and increased property taxes are forcing farmers out of business. They often sell their farms for housing developments, to provide financial security for their retirement. \* Wisconsin Farms - In 1950, Wisconsin had 23.6 million acres of farmland, but 32.6% of this farmland has disappeared, leaving us with only 15.9 million acres in 2002, according to the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service. The number of Wisconsin farms has dropped from 178,000 down to 77,000, from 1910 to 2002. [Some of this farm loss is due to consolidation into much larger farms. \* Nationwide - More than 13.7 million acres of farmland in the U.S. were converted to non-farm use just between 1992 and 1997, according to United States Department of Agriculture. This figure is 51% higher than between 1982 and 1992. 2. Loss of Wildlife Habitat --- Wild forests, meadows, and wetlands are also disappearing, replaced by pavement, buildings and sterile urban landscaping. [See Wildlife] The remaining habitat is smaller, degraded and more fragmented, making survival of certain wildlife species very difficult as they try to reach breeding ponds, hibernation sites, feeding locations, or to establish viable nesting areas. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, important habitat types are disappearing. For example: \* Grasslands - Wisconsin has only .5% (13,000 acres) of its original grassland ecosystem remaining in a relatively intact condition, but much of this remnant acreage has been degraded to some degree \* Oak Savannas - Intact examples of oak savanna vegetation are now so rare that less than 500 acres are listed in the Natural Heritage Inventory as having a plant assemblage similar to the original oak savanna. This is less than 0.01% of the original 5.5 million acres. \* Oak and Pine Barrens - Less than 1% of the pre-settlement oak and pine barren habitat remains \* Shorelands - Degradation of near-shore and shoreline wildlife habitat is increasing with the pace of development, particularly in northern Wisconsin where, since 1960, two thirds of the larger lakes have been developed, the number of home sites has doubled, and the annual number of permits for sea wall construction has tripled. The DNR now reviews and processes over 10,000 permits for piers, near shore ponds, and structures each year. \* Wetlands - More than 50% of Wisconsin's original wetlands have been lost. On the lower Bay of Green Bay, more than 90% of the wetlands are gone. 3. Increased Tax Burden --- The costs of providing community services have skyrocketed as homes and businesses spread farther and farther apart, and local governments are forced to provide for widely spaced services. Owners of these dispersed developments seldom pay the full government costs of serving them, forcing the rest of us to subsidize them with higher taxes at the local, state and federal level. An example: a master plan for the State of New Jersey evaluated conventional sprawl growth patterns against a mix of "infill" development, higher density concentrated new development and traditional sprawl. The projected differences are large. Infill and higher density growth would result in a savings of $1.18 billion in roads, water and sanitary sewer construction (or more than $12,000 per new home) and $400 million in direct annual savings to local governments. Over 15 years, it amounts to $7.8 billion. This does not take into account reductions in the cost of other public infrastructure that result from "infill" growth: decreased spending on storm drainage, less need for school busing (and parent taxi service), fewer fire stations, and less travel time for police, ambulance, garbage collection, and other services. 4. Increased Air Pollution --- Sprawl increases car and truck traffic, leading to major increases in air pollution and smog. Vehicles are the #1 cause of air pollution in many urban areas, and a threat to public and wildlife health. 5. Increased Water Use and Pollution --- Sprawl increases air pollution, which falls out to become water pollution. In addition, urban activities create water pollution directly, through land run-off of construction site erosion, fuel spills, oil leaks, paint spills, lawn chemicals, pet wastes, etc. Sprawled, low-density development produces more than its share of this runoff. [See Non-Point Pollution] In addition, more water is consumed for lawn watering and other landscape activities, straining local water supply systems. 6. Increased Energy Consumption --- At a time when we desperately need to reduce our energy use, sprawled developments increase our energy consumption per person, for increased gasoline, home heating, and electricity use. 7. Social Fragmentation --- Old-fashioned neighborhoods with compact housing, front porches, a corner store, and a school two blocks away were much more conducive to social interactions. It was possible to feel a sense of belonging and community. Now, in sprawled generic housing tracts, many people never meet their neighbors as they pass them in their cars. It's rare for neighborhood events to occur. Families are more isolated and those living alone are marooned in a hostile environment. 8. Loss of Time --- People are forced to spend more time commuting longer distances to reach their jobs, homes, schools and shopping areas. In a compact, efficient city these travel times are often minimal, but sprawled cities take time to navigate. Suburban tract and country dwellers also spend more time maintaining large, empty residential properties: mowing the grass, plowing long driveways, raking leaves, weeding, etc. 9. Increased Private Costs and Risks --- Sprawling business and home owners often fail to realize the long-term personal costs and risks of maintaining distant properties. As property taxes rise to cover service costs, and fuel costs increase for travel and heating large buildings, the owners' budgets may have trouble keeping up. Transportation costs for children and handicapped family members are much greater. As sprawled homeowners age, their large properties become a greater burden to maintain. When they can no longer drive their car, they are stranded. As baby boomers age, large numbers of people will be forced to sell their suburban or country homes to move into the city, creating displacements and possibly lowering the value of expensive homes. Experts in the building industry indicate cost differences of $5,000 to $20,000 per dwelling are seen for compact developments with 15 to 25 units per acre versus sprawled developments with only five houses per acre. These are overhead and maintenance costs faced by families, beyond the cost of buying or building the home. 10. Loss of Exercise --- Sprawled communities force people to drive their cars if they need to get groceries, go to school, or get to work. In the past, cities were structured so many of these destinations were within walking distance. Now, many neighborhoods lack even sidewalks for pedestrians, forcing residents to walk in the street next to the traffic whizzing by. In the past it was normal for kids to walk to school, but now their parents often drive them or they take their own cars. Is it any wonder that an epidemic of obesity is plaguing our country? Walking is the best form of life-long exercise, yet our development patterns actively discourage walking. 11. Degraded, Noisy Surroundings --- Helter-skelter sprawl is not attractive, yet many of our transporation corridors are now edged with jumbles of residential, commercial, and industrial developments (and their enormous parking lots), which have no sense of beauty or order. This adds to the stressful, disconnected feelings which urban residents often express. We're losing the "green space" we need as part of our natural heritage. Large areas of noisy, speeding traffic are also not conducive to peaceful communities. Many people want to live in the country to escape this stress, but urban escapees are helping to create these problems instead, as they commute back to the city for work, school and shopping. 12. Tourism Industry Damage --- As human developments sprawl into the countryside and wildlife habitat shrinks, we're rapidly losing the scenic qualities that attract tourists to our region. Our country roads are being straightened and widened, or worse yet, converted into 4 lane highways (often with additional frontage roads and ugly billboards). Hunters are left with fewer and smaller hunting lands. Anglers are left with crowded, less-appealing fishing sites. This will have direct economic impacts in Wisconsin, where the tourism industry is currently worth $13 billion per year.

### China proves HSR plan solves urban sprawl, generates ridership and must be primarily if not completely governmentally funded

**The Urbanist** (by SPUR- San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association), member supported non-profit organization, **August 2011**, “Learning from a World-Class Transit System”, The Urbanist, <http://www.spur.org/publications/library/article/learning-world-class-transit-system>

Shanghai is China’s urban showcase, and transportation is one of its showpieces of scope, scale and speed. A decade ago, the city had one subway line. Today it has a grid of 11, covering 260 miles and averaging more than 5 million passenger trips a day. By 2020 all those numbers will double. Shanghai is also a hub for the world’s largest high-speed rail network. After just three years of construction, the 820-mile Beijing–Shanghai bullet line opened in June — right on schedule. A year after Shanghai’s World Expo, the city’s sprucing for that impress-the-world event was still evident. Still, public transit is planned for the long term, and most is world class. It’s the only way to serve the transportation demands of a still-growing megacity of 23 million at an acceptable energy cost — and it’s a strident contrast to the shortsighted decision-making that hobbles most U.S. transportation policy. RIDING THE METRO If a trip on a brand-new subway in a foreign city, to an unfamiliar destination, is navigation’s acid test, Shanghai’s rapid-transit system, the Metro, passes. Its spotless, functional stations, with their staffed service counters, feel comfortable. All signs and instructions are in English and Chinese. Platform monitors display arrival times of the next three trains — to the second. Navigating the vast underground stations is easy, even when transferring between lines. Above each platform a color-coded graphic indicates which station you’re in (red), where the train is headed (black) and where it’s been (gray). On the train, there are next-station displays, and newer cars have LED route maps above the doors. Ticketing, which always requires the most passenger decisions, is just as seamless. Just find your destination station and its line on the ticket machine’s touchscreen map, and pay with cash or credit card. Touch your plastic ticket to the gate reader, and go. Use your added-value ticket on taxis, buses and ferries. Like BART, Metro charges by distance: A single trip costs between 45 cents and $1.10, and Metro says it recovers 80 percent of operating costs from fares. (BART receives 65 percent of its operating budget from fares, the best recovery rate in the Bay Area.) Meanwhile, Shanghai has not neglected its bus system. Up at street level a thousand bus lines await, the biggest network in the world. HIGH-SPEED RAIL Shanghai is a hub of China’s rapidly expanding high-speed rail (HSR) lines, which were bought from manufacturers around the world. As part of the deals, China required technology transfer, so now it can build and operate its own systems — as well as others in places like Brazil. The new Beijing–Shanghai bullet line, which cuts the nearly 10-hour travel time in half, expects to carry some 220,000 passengers a day. At peak, trains leave every five minutes. It’s the latest addition to the world’s largest HSR network, covering more than 5,000 miles today — and double that by 2020. HSR is planned, financed and run by the government, which accelerated construction during the 2008 recession. In a country where nearly a billion people don’t have toilets, authorities justify such premium-cost (though still subsidized) passenger travel as making China more competitive in the long term, creating jobs (110,000 for Beijing–Shanghai) in the short term and freeing older rail for more profitable freight. The government claims HSR reduces urban sprawl by linking urban centers that have connecting subway lines, but if those subways go to distant, expensive and lightly populated suburbs — as do some of Shanghai’s — that benefit is muted.

### Urban Sprawl is economically unsustainable and denser cities are more economically prosperous

Futurewise “Building communities, protecting the land”, state growth management group based in the Puget Sound area of Washington state, July 20th, 2005, “Why Sprawl is Bad and Density is Good”, Futurewise, <http://www.mrsc.org/artdocmisc/futurewise.pdf>

Poorly planned low density sprawling development results in many adverse impacts on Washington’s residents, property owners, local governments, and environment. 1 A partial list of the adverse impacts of low density development include: ● Higher public facility costs. 2 ● Higher housing costs and the exclusion of minorities and low-income families. 3 ● More traffic because more people drive alone and must drive longer distances to work and to meet the needs of their families. 4 Sprawling places are likely to have more traffic fatalities per capita than more compact regions due to higher rates of vehicle use. ● Sprawl converts more prime agricultural land from farming to urban uses than more compact forms of development. 5 ● Sprawl destroys more critical areas and other environmentally sensitive areas than compact development. 6 Sprawl results in fish and wildlife habitat losses and habitat fragmentation, the separation of habitats by development. 7 Sprawl’s dispersed development pattern leads to the degradation of water quality by increasing runoff volume, altering regular stream flow and watershed hydrology, reducing groundwater recharge, and increasing stream sedimentation. 8 Scientists at the University of Washington have concluded that although impacts on salmon habitat from urbanization occur in a linear fashion, changes to the physical and biological factors necessary for high quality salmon habitat occurs most rapidly when five to ten percent of a river basin is covered by impervious surfaces (roads, buildings, and parking lots).

## AT: Urban Sprawl Advantage

#### Urban Sprawl can be beneficial and financially help people

JAMES STERNGOLD October 22, 1999 Urban Sprawl Benefits Dairies in California, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/10/22/us/urban-sprawl-benefits-dairies-in-california.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

Nearly four decades ago, Gennie DeBoer was one of many dairy farmers forced by relentless urbanization to flee the farmland in Los Angeles County where her immigrant parents had settled, to build a new life elsewhere. Though a challenge, the move turned out to be a blessing. Mrs. DeBoer and many of the other dairy refugees eventually built state-of-the-art milking operations here in what was then a sun-baked wasteland, 40 miles east of the spires of downtown Los Angeles. In short order, they helped transform the near desert into something few outside the area had a clue about: one of the most densely worked and productive dairy regions in the country. The huge, computerized dairy farms shoehorned into a relatively small area in the Chino Valley in San Bernardino County would come to play a major role in California's little-known leap ahead of Wisconsin several years ago as the country's largest milk-producing state, a marvel of automation and high yields. But as Mrs. DeBoer recounted her success recently and drove a visitor past one giant herd after another in her Lexus, the air redolent of the aromas generated by tens of thousands of Holsteins in close quarters, she said with only a touch of nostalgia, and even a sense of relief, that it was all about to vanish, driven away yet again by Southern California's urban sprawl, present in the form of new shopping centers and subdivisions within sight of the barns. In Southern California sprawl has been such a constant dynamic in the area's restless geometry of growth, especially in the post-war era, that it is not always an enemy to many of those whose lives are uprooted by it. In the case of the Chino Valley dairy farmers, the surge of new subdivisions is actually injecting new vitality into one of the state's largest industries. Many of the farmers here are selling outmoded facilities and their valuable tracts of land, and are using the ample profits to build even larger and more efficient operations in more bucolic areas. Indeed, the big increase in land values as demand for new housing soars is financing a transition that will result for most people not in broken dreams or the end of a way of life, but in a new generation of highly efficient dairies. As a result, California seems likely to substantially widen its lead over Wisconsin and the No. 3 dairy state, New York. ''Yeah, everything here is outdated,'' Mrs. DeBoer said, as she strolled through a barn that held the sweet-sour smell of fresh milk and equipment that was up-to-the-minute 20 years ago. ''In this business, you have to go forward or you're going backward. You have to keep growing. You have to strive to get better.'' Mrs. DeBoer is planning to sell her 200 acres, estimated to be worth $100,000 an acre, and move her 2,000 cows to an efficient new farm she owns with a son about 180 miles north in Tulare County, which is the state's fastest-growing dairy region. The 2,000 acres they own there, she said, cost only about $2,500 an acre. ''What made all this possible in the Chino Valley was the money the farmers got from selling their land in Los Angeles,'' said Robert Feenstra, the son of a Los Angeles dairyman and the executive director of the Milk Producers Council, the industry trade group here. ''The process of urbanization in Los Angeles pushed the land prices up so much that it accelerated the growth of the industry out here. The farmers came with the capital to build these really efficient operations.'' Mr. Feenstra pointed to a new addition to his office wall, a map of Tulare County freckled with red dots representing dairy farms, and added, ''They're doing the same thing all over again.'' The nearby city of Ontario is about to complete the annexation of much of this area in the Chino Valley next month and press ahead with the construction of subdivisions named, in a touch of fanciful marketing, for the properties they are replacing, like Cloverdale Farms and Archibald Ranch. The farmers are looking to the future, and even many of those who say they intend to stay are generally unsentimental. ''People here see it as part of the business process,'' said Fred Aguiar, a former Mayor of Chino who moved here from a dairy in Los Angeles County four decades ago and is now a San Bernardino County supervisor. ''Where you have half a million animals now there will be 100,000 or so people in a few years. We all understand progress.'' Gene Koopman, who sold his farm here last year and now spends a week a month on a big dairy he partly owns in New Mexico, agreed. ''It'll be a little sad to see everyone go,'' Mr. Koopman said, ''but it makes sense from a business and environmental perspective.'' There is even a sense among some farmers that, good as Chino has been to them economically, the growth of the dairy business was too concentrated without enough planning. The current ratio of about 25 cows to an acre here is among the highest in the world. That has created environmental concerns that at least some of the farmers will be glad to leave behind for more spacious farms that, for now at least, are miles from the nearest subdivision. ''None of these farms ever should have been here really,'' said Mrs. DeBoer, as she pointed to the berms thrown up around many of the fields in an effort to contain the dangerous wash of manure and water spread by winter floods. ''No one ever thought about the future. It was way too dense. What happened here will never happen again, anywhere in the world. The county closed their eyes to what was happening in the valley.'' Before the development of modern refrigeration, processing and filtration methods, dairy farms needed to be closer to their markets, and so in the early part of the century a big arc in southeastern Los Angeles County became home to a cluster of farms feeding the appetites of a rapidly growing metropolis. Dairying became so important to the local economy that when a Los Angeles county seal was created in the 1950's, the business was honored on the emblem. On the seal were figures representing the pillars of the local economy, including, among other things, an oil well and a cow. In addition to its density, another quirk of the dairy industry here was that it was operated almost entirely by immigrants. The largest group were Dutch, many of whom came before and just after World War II and quickly adapted their northern European techniques to the hot, dry climate. There were also many Portuguese, mostly from the Azores, and a handful of French Basque farmers. These days, many farmers, like Mrs. DeBoer and her husband, Fred, still speak Dutch and visit relatives in their homeland periodically. They also have built extremely tight-knit communities, with their own churches and Christian schools. To this day, the industry in Southern California is dominated by the Dutch, and the dairy industry in northern California, toward the top of the Central Valley, is dominated by Portuguese families. The last time the industry was forced to move, it also pulled up stakes in a hurry. Joel Splansky, a professor of geography at California State University at Long Beach and the author of a history of the dairy business here, said that as recently as 1962 the town of Dairy Valley, one of the centers of the industry in Los Angeles County, had 3,505 people and 85,000 cows. It was not long after that that rising taxes, changing policies regarding the use of land and environmental concerns over growing manure piles forced the farmers to build their larger and more efficient operations in the Chino Valley. Today, the town of Dairy Valley is called Cerritos. It has a population of 53,240 people, and no cows. Initially, the growth of the industry in the Chino Valley was encouraged. There are now about 880 cows on average on each farm in Chino, with many having 2,000 or so, compared with a national average of fewer than 50 cows per farm. The farms are operated with machine-like precision and a pure business philosophy. Asked if their cows had names, the farmers here chuckled. ''On a lot of those farms in the Midwest and back East, every cow has a name,'' Mr. Koopman said. ''They're sort of pets. It's not like that here. A cow's a piece of machinery. If it's broke, we try to fix it, and if we can't, it gets replaced. ''Today, every cow has a number and a page on the computer.'' Mrs. DeBoer said she had never milked a cow by hand, and never expected to. In the factory that is her barn, the employees, almost entirely Latino, manage the machinery. ''It's just a factory is what it is,'' she said. ''If the cows don't produce milk, they go to beef.'' One result is a conspicuous flow of wealth to the north. Milking plants cost about $5 million to build in Tulare, but the farmers, and their bankers, think nothing of constructing them. ''These are some of the most profitable times ever,'' said Larry Zivelonghi, manager of agricultural lending at the Citizens Business Bank, the biggest local farm lender here. Farms here, Mr. Zivelonghi said, usually generate $250,000 to $300,000 a month in milk sales, and loan default rates have been minimal. But now the barns are being replaced with handsomely designed entry gates topped with sales banners and signs offering houses at $200,000 and up. A huge billboard, in front of a 360-acre spread bulldozed smooth, proclaims: ''The Corona Valley. Worth the Wait.'' The former dairy is being turned into a planned community. Dairy farming is ''a way of life for these people,'' said Mr. Feenstra, of the Milk Producers Council. ''It's a gene. But it's not the land, it's the business they love.''

#### Sprawl is actually beneficial by creating different types of development and in turn creates jobs

Eleanor Jewell Jun 20, 2010 Sprawl Benefits http://www.livestrong.com/article/153823-sprawl-benefits/

The negatives and positives of sprawl or urban sprawl are a matter of personal opinion. Some believe the social costs of sprawl outweigh the advantages it brings in big-city conveniences. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines urban sprawl as a rapid growth and expansion of a metropolitan area. This often infringes on the quiet, rural lifestyles of residents affected by the expansion. But some residents who live on the outskirts of these ever-expanding metropolises feel that sprawl does have its benefits. Leapfrog Development With urban sprawl comes leapfrog development. As cities grow, builders begin to look toward areas outside the city to build homes. Land located on the outskirts of a city costs less than property within the city. As a result, homes built on the land cost less than those within the city limits. Some city workers will decide to give up a shorter commute time for affordable housing--resulting in a building boom. The Property and Environment Research Center, a Montana-based nonprofit, says that leapfrog building that results from sprawl increases commercial activity. This means companies are more likely to set up commercial business centers in areas where people live, in turn creating more jobs. Strip Development. Commercial business growth along arterial highways and strings of suburbs and villages falls under the term strip development, according to the Washington state Department of Commerce. Some of the biggest problems with sprawl and the rise of strip development are traffic congestion and an increase in noise and air pollution. Supporters of sprawl insist that strip development actually helps relieve traffic congestion in the city, lessening traffic congestion overall. Strip development means that people who once had to travel into the city for certain items no longer need to. An increase in commercial business also means more jobs. Low-Density Development. Low-density development is often a direct result of sprawl. Low-density development often comes in the form of large subdivisions or housing developments where homes stand on large lots. Homeowners who opt to buy in subdivisions or housing developments often must conform to certain rules that apply to care and maintenance. Naysayers contend that such forms of expansion are a waste of precious land and resources. But over time, low-density development produces manicured lawns, trees and parks. One of the benefits of sprawl and low-density development is that people like to live in such developments, according to the Property and Environment Research Center.

#### Sprawl Increases house consumption benefiting the economy

Matthew E. Kahn March 08, 2006, Environmental and Urban Economics, http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com/2006/03/benefits-of-sprawl.html

The 2003 American Housing Survey (AHS) micro data set is a representative national sample for examining housing consumption in high sprawl and low sprawl cities. Over 20,000 people are sampled. Using the geographical identifiers in this data base, I merge the metropolitan area sprawl measures to this micro data. For 77 major metropolitan areas, I examine housing consumption in compact versus sprawled cities. In Table Two, I focus on home ownership propensities and land consumption as a function of urban form. As shown in the top row of Table One, home ownership rates are 8.5 percentage points higher in the most sprawled cities relative to the most compact cities. In compact cities, the median household lives on a lot that is 40% smaller than the median household who lives in a sprawled city (i.e the 0 to 25th percentile of the compact distribution). The differential with respect to interior square footage is smaller. The median household in a compact city lives in a unit with 158 fewer square feet than the median household in a sprawl city. While there are clear housing consumption gains for households in sprawled metropolitan areas, these observable differentials do not reveal how much households value such gains. The population differs with respect to its housing preferences. Those people with the greatest taste for large single detached housing will migrate to cities and areas where they can cheaply achieve their housing goals. Some cities such as New York City remain compact due to maintaining a large share of employment downtown. Other cities have increased their compactness by fighting sprawl through Smart Growth policies of land use controls. A political economy literature has examined the distributional effects of who gains and who loses when cities battle sprawl (Katz and Rosen 1987, Portney 2002, Glaeser and Gyourko and Saks 2006, Quigley and Raphael 2005). Incumbent homeowners gain twice from such from anti-growth policies. By limiting increases in housing supply, these policies raise the value of existing homes. If these policies increase the quality of life of the city, then this will increase the demand for the existing homes. Who loses from “Smart Growth” policies? It is well known that minority homeownership rates have lagged behind whites (see Colllins and Margo 2001). Part of this gap is due to differentials in wealth accumulation. In previous research, I have documented that blacks who live in sprawl cities “catch up” on some housing consumption dimensions to whites relative to the black/white housing consumption differential in compact cities (Kahn 2001). In Table Three, I present some new evidence on this question. I use the 2003 AHS data and focus on one measure of housing consumption, the number of rooms in the housing unit. I use multivariate regression techniques (i.e ordinary least squares) to control for such important demographic features as household income, the household’s size, presence of children. Controlling for these factors, I examine how urban form affects housing consumption. As shown in Table Three, an increase in the metropolitan area compactness index reduces minority household housing consumption. This estimate is statistically significant. For white households, the compactness index has a negative but small statistically insignificant coefficient. Moving the average minority household from a high sprawl city (Atlanta) to a low sprawl city (Portland) would reduce its rooms consumption by -.52 = -.6658\*log(126.1/57.7). These results support the hypothesis that sprawl encourages housing convergence. Why could this be? Housing is more affordable in high sprawl areas. Such areas are not erecting entry barriers and developers are building homes. Future work might study whether immigrant housing consumption in European cities is more comparable to natives in less compact cities.

#### Sprawl shortens commute times and helps economy by giving workers more time to make money

Matthew E. Kahn March 08, 2006, Environmental and Urban Economics, http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com/2006/03/benefits-of-sprawl.html

Are commute times higher or lower in compact cities? In compact cities, people are likely to live closer to their downtown jobs but people are more likely to commute by relatively slow public transit. In a monocentric city, workers who commute by private vehicle are likely to slow each other down as they each impose congestion externalities on each other. In contrast, in sprawled metropolitan areas featuring multiple employment centers, workers commute by private vehicle at faster speeds (Gordon, Kumar and Richardson 1991, Crane 2000). To begin to examine these issues, I use commute data from the 2003 American Household Survey. This data set reports the distance to work, and commute time for heads of households. In Table Two, I report summary statistics for workers in compact versus sprawled cities. Relative to workers in compact cities, workers in sprawled cities commute an extra 1.8 miles further each way but their commute is 4.3 minutes shorter. Over the course of a year (400 trips), they save 29 hours. While the workers living in sprawled cities have a longer commute measured in miles, they are commuting at higher speeds. Table Two shows that workers in sprawled cities commute at a speed 9.5 miles per hour faster than workers in compact cities. The Neighborhood Change Database reports the share of census tract commuters who have a less than 25 minute commute by year. In Figure One, I graph this with respect to the census tract’s distance from the Central Business District (CBD). The figure shows that in both 1980 and 2000, the share of commuters with a short commute declines over the distance 0 to 10 miles from the CBD. Starting at the 11th mile from the CBD, the share of commuters with a short commute actually stops declining. This is strong evidence of the effect of sprawl. A large share of residents at such locations are not commuting downtown. Note the differential between the 1980 and the 2000 graphs. Over these twenty years, suburban households (i.e those living more than ten miles from the CBD) have experienced a large percentage increase in short commutes. For example, ten miles from the CBD between 1980 and 2000 there has been over a fifteen percentage point increase in the share of commutes with a commute of 25 minutes or less. This is strongly suggestive evidence of the commuting gains brought about by employment suburbanization. Employment sprawl has shortened commute times for suburban residents as such workers can commute faster over a shorter distance relative to if they worked downtown.

#### Sprawl Protects the Rich

Matthew E. Kahn March 08, 2006, Environmental and Urban Economics, http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com/2006/03/benefits-of-sprawl.html

Relative to a compact city, a sprawled metropolitan area is likely to have more political jurisdictions allowing households to have greater choice (Dye and McGuire 2000). Such political competition forces local jurisdictions to provide services such as garbage collection more efficiently per tax dollar spent relative to how they would provide services if they knew they were a monopolist. A central tenet of local public finance is that diverse households will gain if they can “vote with their feet” and seek out communities that offer the local services and taxes that meet their needs. Households willing to pay high taxes for good local schools will move to certain communities that households with no children would not consider. Many rich people are seeking out suburban communities both due to the housing stock, local public goods offered and the types of neighbors such communities attract. A defining characteristic of cities in the United States is diversity. Such cities feature diversity with respect to ethnic groups and income inequality. The social capital literature has argued that an unintended consequence of the rise of ethnically diverse cities featuring significant income inequality is that people are less civically engaged (Costa and Kahn 2003, Alesina and LeFarina 2005). In such cities, part of the attraction of living in the suburbs may be the opportunity to self segregate into more homogenous communities within the greater metropolitan area. It is important to note that spatial separation of different groups within the same metropolitan area reduces the likelihood of social interactions and this can have perverse consequences. In a sprawled city, if the heterogeneous population migrates and forms more homogenous communities with the poor in the center city and the wealthy in the suburbs, then bridging social capital across ethnic and income groups is less likely to take place. In this case, stereotypes can persist and collective action may be more challenging to achieve. In the past, when rich and poor clustered together in center cities, wealthy urbanites could not so easily escape the problems of their less fortunate neighbors. Pollution or disease spread easily and quickly from the tenements of the poor to the mansions of the rich. As a result, upper-bracket taxpayers were more likely to support policies that improved the living conditions of the worst off. For example, as Troesken (2004) points out, “In a world where blacks and whites lived in close proximity ‘sewers for everyone’ was an aesthetically sound strategy. Failing to install water and sewer mains in black neighborhoods increased the risk of diseases spreading from black neighborhoods to white ones.” Today suburbanization has greatly increased the distance between the middle and upper middle class and the poor. Alesina and Glaeser (2004) investigate why Europe has more generous redistribution for the poor then the United States. They argue that part of the explanation is the fact that the United States has a more diverse population. Another possible cause is sprawl. If more U.S cities were more compact, would U.S tax payers be willing to redistribute more because they would have greater contact with the poor?

#### Sprawl is key to limiting terrorist attacks on cities

Matthew E. Kahn March 08, 2006, Environmental and Urban Economics, http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com/2006/03/benefits-of-sprawl.html

Does sprawl protect the suburban rich from crime? If criminals have less access to cars, then physical distance from the urban poor is likely to reduce the risk that the relatively wealthy face. It is true that over the last decade center city crime has sharply decreased (Levitt 2005). While the causes of these quality of life gains continue to be debated, the consequences of this trend are clearly visible. Center cities will be better able to compete for the skilled (especially those with few children living in the household) against suburbs if the city is perceived to be safe. The reduction in urban crime will differentially increase quality of life in more compact cities such as San Francisco and New York City. Compact cities do face greater risks from terrorist attacks. While only a small share of any city’s population is killed in even very large attacks such as 9/11/2001, people do tend to over-estimate the probability of unlikely events (Rabin 2002). Sprawled cities are also less attractive targets for terrorists (Glaeser and Shapiro 2002, Savitch 2005). It is no accident that the major terrorist attacks have taken place in dense cities such as at the World Trade Center, and the London bus bombs. A sprawled city offers the terrorists fewer causalities and thus less media coverage.

#### Sprawl and Urban Quality of Life Equal

Matthew E. Kahn March 08, 2006, Environmental and Urban Economics, http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com/2006/03/benefits-of-sprawl.html

The previous sections have focused on individual subcomponents of urban quality of life. I have made no attempt to prioritize which dimensions of urban quality of life are most important to people. The economics literature on compensating differentials has attempted to answer this question. The theory of compensating differentials says that it will be more costly to live in “nicer” cities (Rosen 2002). This theory is really a “no arbitrage” result. If migration costs are low across urban areas and if potential buyers are fully informed about the differences in non-market attributes bundles then home prices and wages will adjust such that in nicer cities wages are lower and home prices are higher. An enormous empirical literature has estimated cross-city hedonic price functions to estimate the implicit compensating differentials for non-market goods. In these studies, the dependent variable is the price of home I in city j in community m in year t. Define Xit as home I’s physical attributes in year t. Ajt represents city j’s attributes in year t. Given this notation, a standard real estate hedonic regression will take the form: Priceijmt = 0 + 1\*Xit + 2\*Ajt + ijmt (1) Multivariate regression estimates of this regression yield estimates of the compensating differentials for city level local public goods (based on 2). Intuitively, such estimates reveal how much higher are home prices for observationally identical homes in nice climate areas (i.e San Francisco) versus bad climate areas (i.e Houston). In one prominent cross-city quality of life study, Gyourko and Tracy (1991) estimate equation (1) using 1980 data for 130 center cities. They use ordinary least squares estimates to construct a city quality of life index equal to 2\*Ajt . In their empirical application, this A vector includes city attributes such as rainfall, cooling degree days, heating degree days, humidity, sunshine, wind speed, air pollution levels (measured by particulates), coastal access, cost of living, crime, student teacher ratio, insurance company ratings of the local fire department, hospital beds per-capita, taxes and population size. By estimating equation (1), Gyourko and Tracy provide index weights for the revealed relative importance of each of these factors in local quality of life. Intuitively, if a specific city attribute such as clean air is highly valued by people then cities with clean air should feature higher home prices and pay lower wages. Their city quality of life rankings are useful for me because they allow me to study whether more compact cities have higher quality of life. The Gyourko and Tracy index can be used to rank center cities with respect to their quality of life from best to worst. I am able to merge the Gyourko and Tracy data and the Ewing, Pendall and Chen (2005) data (see Table One) for 47 of the metropolitan areas. In Figure Two, I graph their rankings of each city ranked from best (#1) to worst (#130) as a function of the metropolitan area’s sprawl. This figure allows me to examine whether there is objective evidence that quality of life is higher in more compact cities. Figure Two shows that there is no relationship between quality of life and city compactness for this subset of major metropolitan areas. Put differently, center city quality of life is not lower in more sprawled metropolitan areas. It is important to note that Gyourko and Tracy do not explicitly measure housing consumption or commute times by metropolitan area. Instead, they are focusing on non-market local public goods such as climate, street safety, and public services. Figure Two shows that these non-market services are neither better nor worse in more sprawled cities. An interesting extension of this research would examine cities over time. In sprawling cities, do we see urban quality of life declining? As shown in Figure Two, at a point in time across cities there is little evidence supporting this hypothesis. In the next section, I will present some evidence that air pollution has not grown worse in growing cities.

#### New vehicles offset air pollution effects of Sprawl

Matthew E. Kahn March 08, 2006, Environmental and Urban Economics, http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com/2006/03/benefits-of-sprawl.html

A standard argument that environmentalists make about sprawl is that this trend contributes to urban air pollution. But, new vehicle emissions regulation has offset increased vehicle mileage. The Los Angeles Basin suffers from the highest levels of air pollution in the United States, with the pollution caused mainly by vehicle emissions. But Los Angeles has made dramatic progress on air pollution over the last 25 years. For ambient ozone, a leading indicator of smog, the average of the top 30 daily peak one-hour readings across the county’s 9 continuously operated monitoring stations declined 55% from 0.21 to 0.095 parts per million between 1980 and 2002. The number of days per year exceeding the federal one-hour ozone standard declined by an even larger amount—from about 150 days per year at the worst locations during the early 1980s, down to 20 to 30 days per year today. Recent pollution gains are especially notable because Los Angeles County’s population grew by 29 percent between 1980 and 2000, while total automobile mileage grew by 70 percent (Census of Population and Housing 1980 and 2000; California Department of Transportation 2003). For air quality to improve as total vehicle mileage increases indicates that emissions per mile of driving must be declining sharply over time. To document this fact, I use two waves of the California Random Roadside Emissions tests spanning the years 1997 to 2002 to estimate vehicle level emissions production functions (see Kahn and Schwartz 2006). Intuitively, I control for a number of vehicle characteristics such as the vehicle’s mileage, and the zip code of the vehicle owner. Holding these factors constant, I estimate how vehicle emissions vary as a function of vehicle model year. How much cleaner are 1990 makes relative to 1980 and 1975 makes? In Figure Three, I present predicted vehicle emissions by model year holding all vehicle attributes at their sample means. For each of the three pollutant measures I normalize the predictions by dividing through by the predicted value for 1966 model year vehicles. The Figure shows sharp improvement with respect to model year and documents emissions progress even during years when new vehicle regulation did not tighten. The vehicle emissions progress by model year means that the average vehicle on the road in any calendar year is becoming greener over time. In each subsequent calendar year, there are fewer high emitting pre-1975 model year makes on the roads. This greening of the average vehicles has greatly contributed to the reduction in ambient pollution despite ongoing city growth and increased vehicle mileage. To document this, I use ambient air pollution data from California Ambient Air Quality Data CD, 1980-2002 (California Air Resources Board). This CD-ROM provides all air quality readings taken in the state during this time period. In Figure Four, I graph the percent change in ambient ozone smog for 29 major California counties over the years 1980 to 2000 with respect to county percent population growth. I include data for the 29 California counties that had population levels greater than 200,000. Ambient ozone by county/year is measured by the maximum one hour reading at each monitoring station within the county and then I average these maximum readings by county in each year. Anti-sprawl advocates would argue that counties experiencing greater population growth should experience rising ambient air pollution. As shown in this figure, there is no correlation between county growth and ambient air pollution. The correlation equals -.08. These major counties, even those such as Riverside that have experienced the greatest growth, have enjoyed large pollution reductions over this time period. The vehicle pollution progress documented in Figure Three has helped to offset the scale effects of California’s population growth.

#### Preventing Urban Sprawl will not solve the root problem

Samuel R. Staley, April 2, 1998 Is urban sprawl good for state? Yes http://www.mackinac.org/716

 It's a simple but effective comparison: During the last 35 years, Michigan's central cities lost one million residents while suburban communities grew by 20 percent. At the same time, Michigan experienced record land consumption rates, according to the Michigan Society of Planning Officials. In other words, "urban sprawl" -- the ongoing process of families moving outward to live on their quarter-acre lots in single-family, detached homes -- is gobbling up land and sapping central cities of people, especially in Metro Detroit. Stop sprawl, conventional wisdom says, and you help revitalize big cities. Those who directly link sprawl to urban revitalization misunderstand the forces that shape the growth of new cities and the decline of traditional ones. Planners David Varady and Jeffrey Raffel analyzed the behavior of people who move from one suburban or central city neighborhood to another. The suburbs, they found, attracted families concerned about the quality of their children's public schools and who preferred suburban residential characteristics such as large lots, private yards or larger homes. Families with no children, without a college education and with a preference for urban attributes including proximity to their jobs tended to choose homes in the central city. This is an important lesson: If cities fail to provide the kinds of housing, neighborhoods and environments that residents and businesses want, cities won't be able to keep them. In fact, Detroit may provide one of the best examples of what can happen when a city fails to adapt. Its share of the regional population fell from 27.4 percent in 1980 to 23.0 percent in 1994. Detroit's population declined 17.5 percent during the same period. Meanwhile, city government spending and taxes increased. Although the number of people on Detroit's city payroll decreased, the number of city employees per resident increased 3.3 percent. A smaller tax base was supporting a larger government relative to its population. Detroit residential property taxes are high. A comparison by the District of Columbia government of 51 large American cities found that Detroit had the seventh-highest effective property tax rate -- 76 percent higher than the others. Detroit's total tax burden has been as much as seven times higher than that of other Michigan municipalities. Taxes are not the only hindrance to revitalizing Detroit. Among the nation's 20 largest cities, Detroit's violent and property crime rates are surpassed only by those of Baltimore. While recent charter school initiatives have created improved educational opportunities for a few children, most students in Detroit's public school system have no realistic option to choose a better school. Detroit also makes it difficult to begin a business. The Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Justice identified numerous obstacles to starting businesses, including caps on the number of taxicabs, excessive licensing and education requirements for businesses such as child care, and zoning rules that prohibit virtually any form of home-based business. According to The Detroit News, one new project's site plan review required approval from 22 different "stakeholders," political negotiations between the mayor and city council, and contending with city inspectors who disagreed with one another. Given this environment, city officials and state policymakers should not be surprised when job providers and residents choose more hospitable places. Detroit is, however, taking some important, positive steps to make itself more attractive. These include Mayor Dennis Archer's task force studying ways to reduce city taxes, and privatization of both Detroit Institute of Arts management and streetlight repair and maintenance. These steps are more likely to revitalize Detroit than anti-urban-sprawl laws that limit options for people seeking better schools, homes and neighborhoods, and glamorous stadium and casino projects that concentrate economic benefits in narrow geographic areas. Detroit and other large cities in Michigan will have to put out the welcome mat for all businesses and families to win their hearts, minds and pocketbooks. Central cities can compete with suburban livability and economic vitality by combining a high-quality education system with efficient local government services that support rather than hinder job creation. One of the most positive things Detroit could do is to embrace innovative school choice options. Bad schools alone are reason enough to keep many people from choosing life in the city. Individual choices and market forces drive residential and commercial development decisions. Too much city bureaucracy, politics and regulations only encourage citizens, job providers and private-sector investment to locate elsewhere. Ultimately, suburbanization is the result of a healthy economic and social process: families earning high enough incomes to exercise choice over their quality of life and housing. The task before cities is to provide competitive options for these families, not limit them in the name of "urban sprawl."

#### Sprawl causes the areas affected to become social

December 23, 2006 The Sociable Suburbs: Sprawl is Good? http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/2006/12/the\_sociable\_su.html

According to this research, people in suburbs are, contrary to popular belief, more sociable than their urban counterparts: Suburbanites are sociable, researcher discovers, by Daniel Weintraub, Mercury News: It is conventional wisdom in America that the suburbs are soulless places where people lack the kind of intense connections with one another that are almost inevitable in a vibrant, densely populated city center. Gated or not, the suburbs conjure up an image of bedroom communities vacant by day and filled at night with families locked behind their doors or in their own back yards, distant from their neighbors in both a physical and social sense. That view has helped inform government policies that push for more housing density, public transit and centralization, while shunning what has become known as sprawl. Now comes a University of California-Irvine professor with research that casts doubt on that wisdom... ''Social interaction is higher, not lower, in the suburbs,'' says Jan Brueckner, an economics professor and editor of the Journal of Urban Economics. Brueckner and his co-author, Ann Largey, took data from a survey of 15,000 Americans and ... showed that, other things being equal, suburban residents have more friends and confidants, invite friends into their homes more often and have greater involvement in community groups. People who live in less-densely populated areas, Brueckner says, are more likely to join a hobby-oriented club, attend club meetings and belong to a non-church-related group. For every 10 percent decrease in density, for example, the chance of people talking to their neighbors at least once weekly increases 10 percent, Brueckner found, and involvement in hobby-oriented clubs jumps 15 percent. ''This appears to invalidate one of the frequently heard criticisms of urban sprawl, that it's weakening the social bonds in our society,'' Brueckner told me. ''That's not the case, according to our results.'' ... Brueckner still is not sure why people in more urbanized areas are less likely to interact. It could be, he says, that city neighborhoods offer more theaters, museums and other forms of culture and entertainment, giving residents less of a need to spend time with one another. The fear of crime could be keeping people from interacting more. Or, the crowding typical in an urban setting might lead residents to withdraw into their own space, seeking privacy. ''The old proverb may be true: 'Good fences make good neighbors,''' he says. Brueckner's paper has not been published in a peer-reviewed journal. His techniques will get serious scrutiny from colleagues... But he is confident that his results will hold up. And if they do, policy-makers will have to take notice. Suburban development may complicate commute patterns and gobble up open space. But if Brueckner is right, sprawl does not deaden a community's social life. That's a conclusion that is ... worth taking into account as we evaluate the consequences of different patterns of growth.

## Global Warming Good

**Whether the climate will warm is far from certain; that it will change is unquestionable. The weather has changed in the past and will no doubt continue to vary in the future. Human activity is likely to play only a small and uncertain role in climate change.**

Thomas Moore, Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution, 1995, “GLOBAL WARMING: A Boon to Humans and Other Animals”, http://www.stanford.edu/~moore/Boon\_To\_Man.html

**Whether the climate will warm is far from certain; that it will change is unquestionable. The weather has changed in the past and will no doubt continue to vary in the future. Human activity is likely to play only a small and uncertain role in climate change.** The **burning of fossil fuel may generate an enhanced greenhouse effect** or the release into the atmosphere of particulates **may cause cooling**. **It may also be simply hubris to believe that Homo Sapiens can affect temperatures, rainfall and winds. On the whole, though, mankind should benefit from an upward tick in the thermometer.** Warmer weather means **longer growing seasons, more rainfall overall, and fewer and less violent storms.** **The optimal way to deal with potential climate change is not to strive to prevent it, a useless activity in any case, but to promote growth and prosperity so that people will have the resources to deal with any shift.** It is much **easier for a rich country such as the United States to adapt to any long term shift in weather than it is for poor countries,** most of which are considerably more dependent on agriculture than the rich industrial nations. **Such populations lack the resources to aid their flora and fauna in adapting,** and many of their **farmers earn too little to survive a shift to new conditions.** These agriculturally dependent societies **could suffer real hardship if the climate shifts quickly. The best preventive would be a rise in incomes,** which would diminish their dependence on agriculture. Higher earnings would provide them with the resources to adjust. **The cost of trimming emissions of CO2 could be quite high.** William Cline of the Institute for International Economics -- a proponent of major regulatory initiatives to reduce the use of fossil fuels -- has calculated that the cost of cutting emissions from current levels by one-third by 2040 as 31/2 percent of World Gross Product.[222] Given his assumption that cutbacks of CO2 emissions are done by the least cost methods and his bias, we can be certain that in the real world outlays to slow warming would be considerably higher. In terms of the estimated level of world output in 1992, his estimate would amount to roughly $900 billion annually, an amount that could slow growth and impoverish some who survive on the margin**. These resources could be better spent on promoting investment and growth in the poorer countries of the world. Should warming become apparent at some time in the future and should it create more difficulties than benefits, policy makers would have to consider preventive measures.** Based on history, however, **global warming is likely to be positive for most of mankind while the additional carbon, rain, and warmth should also promote plant growth that can sustain an expanding world population. Global change is inevitable; warmer is better; richer is healthier.**

### Global warming is an entirely natural phenomenon and its effects can even be beneficial, according to two leading researchers.

Sophie Borland, 14, Sep, 2007, “Global warming 'is good and is not our fault'”,http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1563054/Global-warming-is-good-and-is-not-our-fault.html

Recent **climate change is not caused by man-made pollution, but is instead part of a 1,500-year cycle of warming and cooling that has happened for the last million years,** say the authors of a controversial study. Dennis Avery, an environmental economist, and Professor Fred Singer, a physicist, have looked at the work of **more than 500 scientists** and **concluded that it is very doubtful that man-made global warming exists.** They also say that **temperature increase is actually a good thing as in the past sudden cool periods have killed twice as many people as warm spells.** **Two thousand years of published human histories say that the warm periods were good for people.** "It was the harsh, unstable Dark Ages and the Little Ice Age that brought bigger storms, untimely frost, widespread famine, plagues and disease. “In contrast, they say there is evidence that wildlife is flourishing in the current warming cycle with corals, trees, birds, mammals and butterflies adapting well. They claim to show strong historical evidence of an entirely natural cycle based on data of floods on the Nile going back 5,000 years.

**An environment richer in carbon dioxide is likely to stimulate growth.**

Thomas Gale Moore, Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, 2-1-1996 , Loss of Species: Greek Tragedy or Routine Occurrence?, http://www.stanford.edu/~moore/Biodiversity.html

**Several scientists have recently reported an increase from 1981 to 1991 in plant growth in the northern high latitudes.** **More vigorous plant development, while possibly choking out a few species, provides a more plentiful habitat for animals.** Similar reports have originated in Australia where researchers have found that warmer weather, more rainfall, and perhaps greater CO2 have led to bumper crops. The IPCC has postponed their predicted warming of 2.5 degrees from 2040 to 2100, indicating that **climate change will be more gradual than believed previously. The evidence of greater fauna growth, together with the lengthening of the period of any warming suggests that fears of major species extinction are overblown.** Even though no one knows how many different species exist, many environmentalists claim that more species are going extinct than ever before. Paleontologists estimate, however, that roughly 99 percent of all species that have ever existed became extinct before humans invented agriculture. Nevertheless, most people feel it would be a tragedy to lose any existing varieties of animals and plants, with the possible exception of cockroaches, poison ivy, or rats. In fact, **most plants and animals can and do adjust to changes in the environment, sometimes with human help.** **Plants are probably at little risk in a higher CO2 world. Although the temperature is likely to rise, an environment richer in carbon dioxide is likely to stimulate growth.** Moreover, higher CO2 levels would induce a more efficient use of water and make them more drought resistant. In addition, most models suggest an increase in rainfall worldwide. If the warms slowly as expected, almost all mammals could migrate to a suitable climate. **Ocean fishes need not fear climate change; at worst they might have to swim farther north.** It is clear that although many species could adjust, not all would necessarily survive. **The Greek chorus of doomsayers grossly overstates the value of biodiversity. Their exaggerated veneration of each and every species leads to mistaken policy and needless expense.**

### CO2 in the air enables plants to grow better at nearly all temperatures, but especially at higher temperatures

 Sherwood Idso, Craig Idso and Keith Idso, 2003, “The Specter of Species Extinction Will Global Warming Decimate Earth’s Biosphere?” http://www.marshall.org/pdf/materials/150.pdf **So what could we logically expect to happen to the biosphere in a world of both rising air temperature and atmospheric CO2 concentration? We could expect that earth’s plants would extend the current cold-limited boundaries of their ranges both poleward in latitude and upward in elevation, but that the heat-limited boundaries of the vast majority of them would remain pretty much as they are now, i.e., unchanged.** **Hence, the sizes of the ranges occupied by most of earth’s plants would increase.** **We additionally hypothesize that many of the animals that depend upon those plants for food and shelter would exhibit analogous behavior. Hence, with respect to both plants and animals, we would anticipate that nearly everywhere on earth, local biodiversity or species richness would increase in a world of rising air temperature and atmospheric CO2 concentration, as the expanding ranges of the planet’s plants and animals overlapped those of their neighbors to an ever-increasing degree.** It is true that some species of plants and animals have indeed moved pole ward and upward in response to 19th and 20th century warming; but they have not been forced to do so. The pole ward and upward extensions of the cold-limited boundaries of these species’ ranges have been opportunistic movements, movements that have enabled them to inhabit regions that previously were too cold for them. But where it has been predicted that species would either be compelled to move towards cooler regions or suffer death, i.e., at the heat-limited boundaries of their ranges, they have in many instances, if not most instances, succumbed to neither alternative. As a result, instead of suffering range contractions, indicative of advancement towards extinction, these species have experienced range expansions, indicative of a propensity to avoid extinction. The end result of these facts is that if the atmosphere’s temperature and CO2 concentration rise together, plants are able to successfully adapt to the rising temperature, and they experience no ill effects of the warming. **Under such conditions, plants living near the heat-limited boundaries of their ranges do not experience an impetus to migrate poleward or upward towards cooler regions of the globe.** At the other end of the temperature spectrum, however, plants living near the cold-limited boundaries of their ranges are empowered to extend their ranges into areas where the temperature was previously too low for them to survive. **And as they move into those once-forbidden areas, they actually expand their ranges, overlapping the similarly expanding ranges of other plants and thereby increasing local plant biodiversity.**

**For some in Greenland these days, the grass is looking greener.**

James Owen, writer for National Geographic News, October 17, 2007, “Global Warming Good for Greenland?”, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/10/071017-greenland-warming.html

**Rapid thawing brought on by global warming on the world's largest island has opened up new opportunities for agriculture, commercial fishing, mining, and oil exploration.** The island's native people, though, may not be on the "winning" side of warming. **In southwestern Greenland,** for example, **the grass-growing season gets longer each year**, boosting productivity for some **60 sheep farms now established in the region**. Up to 23,500 sheep and lambs are slaughtered annually. **Dairy cattle have recently been reintroduced,** and a government-led project is expected to yield 29,058 gallons (110,000 liters) of milk annually, according to the new report**. Locally grown potatoes have appeared in supermarkets, alongside broccoli and other vegetables never before cultivated in Greenland.** **Commercial fishermen are anticipating bumper cod catches after the fish recently moved north into Greenland's waters.** Halibut are also increasing in size. **Greenland's melting ice cap has triggered a rush for diamonds, gold, and other metals as mining companies’ prospect previously covered mineral-rich rocks.** Oil companies have negotiated rights to explore for oil and natural gas along the Greenlandic coastline. The island may also be swept up in the scramble to claim the Arctic seafloor and its oil wealth. **Potential new revenues from oil, mining, and cheap hydroelectricity supplied by abundant melt water could soon make independence from Denmark affordable for Greenland, which is heavily dependent on the European country for funding.** The report added **Greenland's progress** **"towards a sustainable economy with the possibility of full sovereignty" may come much sooner than previously thought.**

## AT: Airlines DA

### Uniqueness

#### Airlines are dying

Reuters, 8-1-2012, “US airlines likely to see slowing demand - Dahlman Rose,” http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/01/uk-usairlineindustry-research-dahlmanros-idUSLNE87001Q20120801

Dahlman Rose & Co downgraded the U.S. airline industry to "cautious" from "optimistic," saying a slowdown in business and leisure travel would make it difficult for the airlines to raise fares in case of a jet fuel spike. The airlines will have a tough time maintaining load factor - a measure of how full planes are - over 85 percent, analysts led by Helane Becker wrote in a client note. Business and leisure consumers are likely to curb travel in the face of Europe's economic woes and possible slowing growth in China and India. Dahlman Rose analysts said they expect industry passenger unit revenue (PRASM) growth to slow in July, August and September. The analysts also cut their ratings on the stocks of several airliners including Delta Air Lines Inc (DAL.N), JetBlue Airways Corp (JBLU.O), Republic Airways Holdings Inc (RJET.O) and United Continental Holdings Inc (UAL.N). Shares of Delta closed at $9.65 on Tuesday on the New York Stock Exchange. United Continental stock closed at $18.89. (Reporting by Sagarika Jaisinghani and A. Ananthalakshmi in Bangalore)

#### Decline coming – our evidence is predictive

Brendan Byrnes, staff writer, 7-23-2012, “Are Airlines an Attractive Buy?” Daily Finance, http://www.dailyfinance.com/2012/07/23/are-airlines-an-attractive-buy/

Today, Fool analysts Brendan and Austin discuss the increasingly attractive airline industry. But with US Airways up more than 100% in 2012, and Delta and United having a nice run as well, it looks like the industry might be peaking. The factors that generated profit earlier this year -- low commodity prices and high demand for summer travel -- are slowly eroding, and the long-term outlook for the industry remains bleak. Airlines will suffer if oil prices rise, but investors can actually generate huge profits. If you're an airline investor looking to hedge against rising commodity prices, or if you're on the lookout for some currently intriguing energy plays, check out The Motley Fool's 3 Stocks for $100 Oil. You can get free access to this special report by clicking here.

#### Airlines are dying

Market Watch, 7-5-2012, “Aerospace Supply Chain Faces Harsh Reality of Having to Deliver Huge Backlog of Orders Following a Boom in Commercial Aircraft Orders in 2011, Says AlixPartners Study,” http://www.marketwatch.com/story/aerospace-supply-chain-faces-harsh-reality-of-having-to-deliver-huge-backlog-of-orders-following-a-boom-in-commercial-aircraft-orders-in-2011-says-alixpartners-study-2012-07-05

However, the future profitability of the airline industry remains uncertain, says the AlixPartners study, with fuel price instability (despite some stabilization of late) and degrading economic drivers weighing on outlook. The study found that net profits for the airline industry globally have been squeezed to an all-time industry average low of 0.5% of revenues -- due to fierce competition, overcapacity-related revenue pressures and rising operating costs.

#### Airlines are toasted now – fuel costs and the economy

Wall Street Journal, June 5 [ Global Airlines Fly Into 'Storm' <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303918204577448033877417726.html>]

Higher fuel costs and a treacherous economic environment are weighing on global airlines, including Qantas and Emirates Airline. Asia's carriers last year earned 47% less in net profit than in 2010, at US$4.8 billion, according to the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines. Last month, Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. said it was considering whether to accelerate the retirement of aging aircraft after it warned of "disappointing" first-half financial results. Singapore Airlines Ltd. and Korean Airlines recently posted quarterly losses, forcing both to rethink schedules and adjust aircraft deployment to boost profits. Even fast-growing Middle East airlines, once perceived to be immune from global trends, have started to voice concern about business conditions. "It's a perfect storm of adversity now facing airlines," Tim Clark, president of Dubai-based Emirates Airline, said in an interview. "The euro is going south, the pound is going south, fuel costs are still too high." Amid those challenges, though, Etihad Airways of Abu Dhabi said Tuesday it has bought a nearly 4% stake in Qantas rival [Virgin Australia](http://online.wsj.com/public/quotes/main.html?type=djn&symbol=VAH.AU) Ltd. [VAH.AU 0.00%](http://online.wsj.com/public/quotes/main.html?type=djn&symbol=VAH.AU) Shares in Virgin Australia closed at 41 Australian cents (40 U.S. cents) each Monday, leaving the company with a market capitalization of 906.2 million Australian dollars (US$881.5 million). That gives an implied valuation of A$35.9 million on Etihad's 3.96% stake. A spokesman for Etihad said it would like to raise its holding to at least 10%. Etihad operates 24 flights a week between Abu Dhabi in the Persian Gulf and Australia. Mr. Clark of Emirates cautioned that many global carriers could be forced to retrench. Last month, Emirates said its latest fiscal-year net profit fell 72% after the company took a US$1.6 billion hit from high fuel costs. Mr. Clark added Tuesday that the price of Brent crude oil will need to drop to between US$80 and US$90 a barrel, from about US$100, to revive margins.

#### The Airline Industry is losing money even with good weather

Ted Reed, March 20, 2012, Reed is a transportation writer for The Mainstreet Newsletter, http://www.mainstreet.com/article/lifestyle/travel/3-horrible-facts-about-airline-industry

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (TheStreet) -- **Things are so bad for the airline industry that even good weather causes problems.**In February, mild weather enabled several carriers to post extremely high completion rates. JetBlue and US Airways, for instance, completed 99.8% and 99.7%, respectively, of their scheduled flights.Their reward? Because more flights mean less revenue than expected for each flight operated, the carriers failed to meet expectations for revenue per available seat mile, an industry metric that measures the amount of revenue associated with each seat flown one mile.

But isn't that always the way in this cursed industry, which has been unprofitable for investors since the days of the Wright brothers? For all of its efforts to restructure, U.S. airlines squeezed out marginal profits last year and in 2010, after losing $50 billion in the previous decade.Yes, the dramatic reshaping of the industry, which now charges fees for services and restrains capacity, was long needed. No, this sector is not fixed. Last year, U.S. airlines made just $390 million -- less than half a penny per dollar of revenue.Three events this month have underscored the deep-seated problems of an industry whose fate is almost entirely dependent on external factors:Airline profits are slaves to oil prices.On March 14, US Airways CEO Doug Parker sent an ironic letter to employees."We did everything right last year: record revenue performance, seven first-place finishes in the Department of Transportation rankings and we kept our costs competitive," Parker said. "However, the reality of this business is we made less in profit in 2011 because the price of fuel was $1.2 billion higher than it was in 2010; therefore our profit-sharing checks are smaller."At any airline, the principal pursuit of most employees is to provide on-time operations. At US Airways last year, on-time performance was spectacular. Just not as spectacular as the rise in oil prices.Even good weather is bad. Everyone knows bad weather diminishes airline operational performance, but few realized good weather can diminish financial performance.At the recent JPMorgan transportation conference, executives from JetBlue, US Airways and Southwest all mentioned that February's high completion factors led to lower revenue per available seat mile.

### Link Turn

#### HSR forces airline innovation – that saves the industry

Fu, Zhang, and Lei, 2011 [ Xiaowen Fu a,\*, Anming Zhang b, Zheng Lei , a Faculty of Business, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China b Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia, Canada c Department of Air Transport, Cranfield University, UK, “Will China’s airline industry survive the entry of high-speed rail?”, Research in Transportation Economics 35 (2012) 13e25]

Chinese airlines will survive in the entry of HSR (and ensuing competition) by exploiting their own competitive advantages. For example, airlines’ distribution channel covers a larger area and has more power in such areas as direct sales. The electronic ticket system adopted by airlines is much more convenient for passengers to book, change, return or pay for their tickets. The civil aviation industry in China has realized a high level of market-oriented operation through a three-decade long industrial reform (Zhang, 1998), thus the air ticket price is very responsive to the market. With more flexible marketing and pricing strategies, the profit for airlines may decrease due to the entry of high-speed railway, but the profitability and competitive power of the airline industry remain. Most importantly, with the strong growth of the overall Chinese economy, international trade and tourist market, Chinese airlines will continue to enjoy strong demand growth in the medium to long term. Our investigation does predict a challenging period ahead for Chinese airlines. They cannot simply repeat the unbalanced growth as in the past. In order to achieve sustainable development, Chinese airlines must significantly improve their competitiveness in terms of network configuration, cost efficiency and service quality, thereby contributing to the long-term regional and global growth of air transportation.

#### And, Congestion – the plan solves it and it boosts airlines

Kantor, 2009 [ County Bank Professor of Economics University of California, Merced The Economic Impact of the California High-Speed Rail in the Sacramento/Central Valley Area prepared by: Shawn Kantor, Ph.D.]

Congestion-reduction benefits refer to the social savings resulting from the decreased travel times induced by the HSR. The HSR will induce some travelers to shift from driving or flying in favor of HSR, thus providing a positive spillover benefit to those individuals who would continue to drive their own cars or use air transportation. As HSR became more widely used by commuters and other passengers, it would lead to less congestion on highways and in airports. Freeway gridlock during peak travel times would be reduced, as would airport waiting times. Not only would travelers benefit if their flights could leave and arrive as scheduled, but the airline industry would reap benefits as well as aircraft operating delays were reduced. Cambridge Systematics calculated the benefits accruing in the Central Valley from reduced automobile delays to be nearly $2 billion, while the reduction in air delays specific to the region would be a relatively modest $2.6 million.

#### HSR’s electricity is generated by clean, energy efficient renewable sources

Mark Tutton, Anthony Perl and Tony Bosworth, Tutton is an environmental expert for CNN/ Perl is a Professor of Urban Studies and Political Science at Fraser University/ Bosworth is the head campaigner in the energy and climate team for “Friends of the Earth”, November 19th, 2011, CNN, “How green is high-speed rail?”,<http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/18/world/how-green-is-hsr/index.html>

(CNN) -- High-Speed Rail (HSR) has been around been around for decades, but it's back in the transport spotlight amid a surge of interest from the United States and China. Despite cuts to President Obama's original plan to spend $53 billion on HSR over the next 25 years, an ambitious scheme for HSR to connect U.S. cities is still on the agenda. China has built more than 8,000 kilometers of high-speed rail lines in recent years and plans to spend over $400 billion on its program in the next five years, while the United Kingdom is contemplating plans to extend its more modest HSR network. Supporters of HSR often list environmental sustainability among its virtues. Some argue it's a greener alternative to car and air travel and see it as an easy win in weaning people of fossil fuels. But just how green is HSR? Two experts with different views give their opinions. Anthony Perl, author of "Transport Revolutions" Dr. Anthony Perl is Professor of Urban Studies and Political Science at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where he directs the Urban Studies Program. His latest book, co-authored with Richard Gilbert, is "Transport Revolutions: Moving People and Freight Without Oil." Any debate about the future of high-speed rail must consider where this mobility option fits into the 'big picture' of how transportation systems meet looming economic, energy and environmental challenges. In a world where 95% of motorized mobility is currently fueled by oil, high-speed rail offers a proven means of reducing dependence on this increasingly problematic energy source. This value of using proven electric propulsion technology should not be underestimated when both the time and money to deploy energy alternatives are in short supply. In our recent book Transport Revolutions, Richard Gilbert and I documented the economic, environmental and political dividends to be gained from replacing the internal combustion engines powering today's aircraft, cars, and motor vehicles with traction motors that can be powered by multiple energy sources delivered through the electric grid. Since electricity is an energy carrier, it can be generated from a mix of sources that incorporate the growing share of geothermal, hydro, solar, and wind energy that will be produced in the years ahead. And because electric motors are three to four times more efficient than internal combustion engines, an immediate improvement will precede introducing renewable energy into transportation. Grid-connected traction offers the only realistic option for significantly reducing oil use in transportation over the next 10 years. Anthony Perl Grid-connected traction offers the only realistic option for significantly reducing oil use in transportation over the next 10 years. If such a shift does not begin during this decade, the risk of a global economic collapse and/or geo-political conflict over the world's remaining oil reserves would become dangerously elevated. Making a significant dent in transportation's oil addiction within 10 years is sooner than fuel cells, biofuels, battery-electric vehicles and other alternative energy technologies will be ready to deliver change. Biofuels that could power aircraft now cost hundreds of dollars per gallon to produce. Batteries that a big enough charge to power vehicles between cities are still too big and expensive to make electric cars and buses affordable. But grid-connected electric trains have been operating at scale and across continents for over a century. And when the Japanese introduced modern high-speed trains through their Shinkansen, in 1964, the utility of electric trains was greatly extended. Since the 1980s, countries across Asia and Europe have been building new high-speed rail infrastructure to deploy electric mobility between major cities up to 1,000 kilometers apart. For intercity trips between 200 and 1,000 kilometers, high-speed trains have proven their success in drawing passengers out of both cars and planes, as well as meeting new travel demand with a much lower carbon footprint than driving or flying could have done. If we are serious about reducing oil's considerable risks to global prosperity and sustainability, we will not miss the opportunity offered by high-speed rail to decrease transportation's oil consumption sooner, rather than later. Tony Bosworth, Friends of the Earth Tony Bosworth is a campaigner for Friends of the Earth, in its energy and climate team. He has a long track record of working on environmental issues, including a spell as transport campaigner for the environmental campaigning charity. Across the world governments are looking to high speed rail to provide fast, modern transport systems fit for the 21st century. By the end of 2012 China is expected to have more high speed rail lines than the rest of the world combined, while President Obama aims to give 80 per cent of Americans access to fast rail travel within 25 years. But if governments want high speed rail to spearhead the drive towards a cleaner transport system they must look further than simply providing faster trains. The UK is currently mulling over a high speed rail link between London and Birmingham, a city about 160 kilometers north-west of the capital. But according to official estimates, it's unlikely to lead to significant carbon dioxide cuts -- and may even increase climate-changing emissions. So what's stopping high speed rail being a major part of a greener transport future in Britain? Over two thirds of the world's electricity comes from fossil fuels so until (or unless) power stations are weaned off fossil fuels, electric trains will still have a significant climate impact. Tony Bosworth First there's the electricity to power the trains. Over two thirds of the world's electricity comes from fossil fuels so until (or unless) power stations are weaned off fossil fuels, electric trains will still have a significant climate impact -- although rail travel is still better than flying or driving. Secondly, will high speed rail entice people off the roads and short-haul flights? French TGVs and the Channel Tunnel rail link have succeeded, but official calculations estimate that only 16 per cent of anticipated passengers for the London to Birmingham line will have swapped from planes or cars. One of the main factors is cost. Despite soaring fuel prices, motoring and flying are still expected to be cheaper than high speed rail. If faster rail travel is to become a realistic alternative it must be affordable too. The UK's high speed rail link is expected to cost a whopping $54 billion. But living as we do in cash-strapped times there's surely a strong case for investing some of that that money in less grandiose, but more effective, projects. Perhaps some high speed rail money could be diverted to upgrade commuter and longer-distance services, making life easier and cheaper for ordinary passengers -- and making a bigger and fast contribution to cutting emissions. High speed rail can play a major role in tackling climate change around the world -- if it's affordable, powered by clean energy and gets people out of their cars and off planes, we really will be speeding in the right direction.