\*\*\*Solvency

# General

High speed rail doesn’t solve – economic uncertainties, high cost, and geography

**Dovell, 3/7** (Elizabeth, content writer at Council of Foreign Relations, B.A. in international relations, “U.S. Rail Infrastructure,” CFR, 3/7/12, <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/us-rail-infrastructure/p27585>] MWH

Economic uncertainties for expanding high-speed rail remain, including the projected number of passengers, average cost, and public benefits. Republicans generally prefer private investment as opposed to government funding for such high-risk ventures. The debate in California is a prime example of the overall contention surrounding HSR innovation in the United States. Many in the state legislature support the concept of a California HSR network (Reuters), but the projected cost of nearly $100 billion has lawmakers rattled. William J. Mallett, transportation policy specialist at the Congressional Research Service, notes: "I'm not convinced high-speed rail is the answer to some people's prayers, because the geography of the United States is different than Europe… a high-speed rail network that covers the whole country is probably not feasible." Countries with HSR generally have higher population densities, smaller land areas, and lower rates of car ownership than the United States.

HSR isn’t worth the investment – high cost, necessary taxes, low demand, and low speed

University of Chicago Urban Network, ’11 (Community of scholars aiming to spur innovation in the study of urban processes and encourage interdisciplinary discourse in urban research theory, and policy, “Would High Speed Rail Benefit Cities?” <http://www.urbanportal.org/issues/entry/would_high_speed_rail_benefit_cities>, 4/4/11] MWH

Opponents of high-speed rail argue that the costs of such a massive infrastructural project far outweigh the benefits. Critics argue that the project will be significantly more expensive than governmental officials have budgeted for, citing cost overruns from previous projects in California. These costs, critics argue, would place an undue burden on taxpayers and a strain on states already in financial distress. Ridership is also a sticking point: currently, Amtrak serves 28.7 million passengers nationwide, with an average passenger load of 47%, such that the trains are operating substantially under capacity. With little interest in the currently available train lines, critics argue that governmental officials have little justification to make another significant and long-term investment. Opponents also point out that the term “high-speed” is itself misleading—the high-speed rail project proposed in Ohio, for example, would only average 39 miles an hour, after stops are included.

High Speed Fail

**Kaufmann ‘10** [Kaufmann, Larry. "What's Wrong with High Speed Rail."*Isthmus.com*. The Daily Page, 23 Sept. 2010. Web. <http://www.isthmus.com/isthmus/article.php?article=30606>.] CSS

According to Marc Eisen, opponents of the proposed high-speed rail line between Madison and Milwaukee might understand its price, but not its value (Opinion, “Give Trains a Chance,” 9/10/10). Okay, Marc: Let's talk about the value of this project using basic economic concepts — costs, benefits and alternatives. Start with the transportation alternatives, since people already use these to get from here to Milwaukee. Most of us, of course, just get in our cars and drive east on I-94. You can leave when you want, arrive in an hour and a half, and use five or six gallons of gas (round trip) for an out-of-pocket cost of about $15.vAn alternative is Badger Bus. There are a variety of departure points and routes, some that get to Milwaukee in less than two hours. There are also multiple departure times, and, while prices vary, the round trip will likely cost between $35 and $40.vThe proposed"high speed" rail option is a bit of a misnomer, since the train will initially average 58 mph.The line would be comparable to Badger Bus in terms of trips per day and travel times, although the train would have fewer pickup points and less route flexibility. The price is also higher, with a round-trip ticket expected to cost about $66.

But these ticket prices cover only a fraction of the costs. Construction funds will be provided by the federal government and ultimately recovered from federal taxpayers. Construction expenses are projected to be $810 million but could top $1 billion, since nearly every commuter rail project ends up costing more than expected.

Once the line is built, operating costs fall on state and local governments. Revenues collected from ticket sales will not cover operating expenses even under optimistic ridership forecasts. Operating the line will therefore add to the state's existing budget deficit, already at record levels. This will crowd out spending on other public services and spur state tax increases.

The overall (federal and state) government subsidy will also be huge — more than $100 per passenger *per ride*, over and above the ticket price. Badger Bus, in contrast, is a nonsubsidized private enterprise.

HSR has no advantages

**O'Toole 8** (10/31/08) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow, High-Speed Rail: The Wrong Road for America, http://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/highspeed-rail-wrong-road-america

At first glance, President Obama's enthusiasm for building a high-speed rail network linking major cities seems like a wise move. On closer inspection, however, it is clear that the plan would cost taxpayers billions of dollars and do little to reduce traffic congestion or improve the environment.

Already California, Florida, Illinois and other states are applying for funds under the president's plan. But, except for rail contractors, Americans should find little reason to like this proposal.

Although every taxpayer would share the cost of these trains, high-speed rails are not about serving the common people. Instead, they are aimed at the elite. Japanese and French high-speed trains are attractive to tourists, but they're not heavily used by local residents. Residents of Japan and France on average ride their bullet trains less than 400 miles a year.

Amtrak charges a minimum of $99 for its high-speed Acela from New York to Washington, but only $72 for its conventional train. Fares for unsubsidized buses on this route start as low as $20 (including free Wi-Fi), while airfares start at $99. Only the wealthy and those whose employers cover the cost will pay the $99 rail fare.

Obama's 9,000-mile high-speed rail plan reaches just 33 states, yet the $13 billion he proposes to spend would cover about 2.5% to 25% of the cost, depending on how the system is built. In contrast with the interstate highway system, which paid for itself out of user fees, high-speed rail fares would not cover the capital costs and only part of the operating costs.

HSR is really moderate speed rail, does not solve.

**O'Toole 8** (10/31/08) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow, High-Speed Rail: The Wrong Road for America, http://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/highspeed-rail-wrong-road-america

Most of Obama's plan should really be called "moderate-speed rail," as it would upgrade existing freight lines to run passenger trains at top speeds of 110 mph. At around $5 million per mile, the total cost would come close to $50 billion.

Not satisfied with moderate-speed trains, California says it wants half of all federal funds so it can build brand-new 220-mph rail lines. But it's unlikely other states will settle for the slower trains if California gets the faster ones. Building fast trains nationwide would cost at least $500 billion. (By comparison, and adjusting for inflation, the 47,000-mile interstate highway system cost about $425 billion.)

Besides the high costs, these trains do little to relieve congestion. "Not a single high-speed track built to date has had any perceptible impact on the road traffic" in Europe, says Ari Vatanen, a European Parliament member. California predicts its 220-mph trains would take just 3.5% of cars off of roads. California highway traffic grows that much every two years.

Moderate-speed trains would do even less. Nor would such trains be good for the environment. Amtrak diesel trains are only a little more energy efficient than flying or driving, and pumping those trains up to 110 mph would reduce their efficiency. Because planes and cars are growing 2% more energy-efficient per year, rail would fare poorly by such measures over the next 15 to 20 years.

Moreover, high-speed rail consumes enormous amounts of energy and emits enormous volumes of greenhouse gases. These would cancel out any operational savings over cars and planes.

Interstates paid for themselves out of gas taxes, and most Americans use them almost every day. Rail requires huge tax subsidies and would regularly serve only a small elite. Which is the better symbol for the America President Obama wants to build?

HSR fails locally.

**O'Toole 9** (5/9/09) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow ,High-Speed Rail Is No Solution, http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/highspeed-rail-is-no-solution

California wants to build a true high-speed rail line between San Francisco and Los Angeles, capable of top speeds of 220 miles per hour and average speeds of 140 miles per hour. The environmental analysis report for the California high-speed rail projects costs of $33 billion for 400 miles, while the Midwest Rail Initiative projects costs of $7.7 billion for 3,150 miles of moderate-speed rail. That's $82 million per mile for true high-speed rail (partly because the California project goes through some mountains) and only $2.4 million for moderate-speed rail. All else being equal, high-speed rail will cost 10 to 12 times more than moderate-speed rail. A true, national high-speed rail network would cost more than half a trillion dollars.

Construction of such high-speed rails will consume enormous amounts of energy and emit enormous volumes of greenhouse gases. Since future cars and planes will be more energy efficient, there are likely to be no long-term environmental benefits from investment in high-speed rail.

Electricity would power the California trains. But, because most U.S. electricity comes from coal or other fossil fuels, these high-speed trains won't reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. As we develop more renewable sources of electricity, we would do better using it to power plug-in hybrids or electric cars than high-speed rail.

Americans who have ridden French or Japanese high-speed trains often wonder why such trains won't work here. The problem is, they don't work that well in France or Japan.

France and Japan have each spent roughly (after adjusting for inflation) the same amount of money per capita on high-speed rail as the United States spent on the interstate highway system. Americans use the interstates to travel nearly 4,000 passenger miles and ship more than 2,000 ton-miles of freight per person per year.

By comparison, high-speed rail moves virtually no freight and carries the average resident of Japan less than 400 miles per year, and the average resident of France less than 300 miles per year. It is likely that a few people use them a lot, and most rarely or not at all.

Interstates paid for themselves out of gas taxes, and most Americans use them almost every day. Moderate or high-speed rail would require everyone to subsidize trains that would serve only a small elite. Which symbolizes the America that Obama wants to rebuild better?

# Ridership

The plan is a bad investment that creates little new mobility.

De Rugy, 1/10 (Veronique, senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, PhD in economics from University of Paris 1Pantheon-Sorbonne, “High-speed Rail to Nowhere,” 1/10/12, http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/287697/high-speed-rail-nowhere-veronique-de-rugy] MWH

Of course, lawmakers in California dismiss the report and would like to to move ahead with the project. This is amazing especially considering how much evidence we have that high-speed rail is, at best, a “questionable investment even if California could afford to build it,” as Lane says. In this piece, for instance, the Cato Institute’s Randy O’Toole shows that high-speed rail creates almost no new mobility (it addsa tiny number of new travelers), which means no real value. And then, of course, it’s a terrible investment for taxpayers, who will be taking a risk as well as subsidizing a transportation system that most of them won’t use. (The estimate is that the overall high-speed rail system envisioned by president Obama will serve only 8 percent of Americans.) O’Toole explains: Unlike the interstates, which were paid for exclusively out of gasoline taxes and other highway user fees, all of the capital costs and much of the operating costs of high-speed trains will be subsidized by taxpayers who will rarely ride the trains. This is the way it works in France and Japan, where — despite having population distributions much more conducive to rail travel — residents ride high-speed trains an average of less than 500 miles a year.There are many reasons why passenger rail service doesn’t work in America. As Robert Samuelson wrote in the Washington Post a few months ago: Interstate highways shorten many trip times; suburbanization has fragmented destination points; air travel is quicker and more flexible for long distances (if fewer people fly from Denver to Los Angeles and more go to Houston, flight schedules simply adjust). Against history and logic is the imagery of high-speed rail as “green” and a cutting-edge technology.And Lane confirms: But the sprawling, decentralized cities of the United States do not make convenient destinations for train travelers. International experience shows that high-speed rail entails expensive debt service and large operating subsidies. This would likely be the case here as well, since, for better or worse, rail must compete with well-established air and car options.Business travel is one ostensible purpose of bullet trains in California, but increasingly people meet via video conference.Contrary to what many Americans think, the French do have nice and fast trains but they don’t use them enough to make them profitable. Even though France’s geography is better suited to rail travel than America’s, only one French high-speed line breaks even, and relatively few people use this expensive system of transportation.

Double-bind – either the rail is slow or it transports nobody; either there is no revenue or no riders.

**Goodman, ’10** (Josh, Associate Professor of Public Policy @ Harvard, PhD in economics from Columbia, “High-Speed Rail: Transit Solution or Fiscal Disaster?” May 2010, <http://www.governing.com/topics/economic-dev/High-Speed-Rail-Transit-Solution.html>] MWH

Another question is ridership. A series of trade-offs will influence how many people ride the trains.The more stations that are built, the more places trains can pick up riders. But stopping frequently slows high-speed rail down. Likewise, lower fares would mean higher ridership, which would relieve more train and plane congestion. But up to a point, higher fares would generate more revenue for the system.The authority's most recent business plan floated the idea of train fares at $104.75 from San Francisco to Los Angeles – or 83 percent of a plane trip's projected cost, instead of the 50 percent in its previous report. For ridership, that difference is huge: The authority projects 58 million riders with the 50 percent level in 2035. At 83 percent, it drops to 41 million. Critics contend that the projections are unrealistic. Everyone agrees ridership estimates are, at this point, informed speculation at best.But how do you design a rail system if you don't know how many people will ride it? "It drives everything – how many tracks, how many parking spots, how many everything," says Nadia Naik, co-founder of Californians Advocating Responsible Rail Design, a Palo Alto-based group that has pushed for more disclosure from the authority. Ultimately Palo Altans worry that their homes will be razed to build capacity the system won't end up needing.

Double-bind: either the rail is remote or it is extremely expensive.

**De Rus and Nombela, ’07** (Ginés, Dept. of Applied Economic Analysis at Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gustavo, Chair of Infrastructure Economics, PhD in Economics from London School of Economics, Professor at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy,* Vol. 41, No. 1, Jan. 2007, JSTOR] MWH

Cities with high population densities along the corridor mean moreusers sharing the fixed costs of capacity. Nevertheless, high density urbanareas mean higher construction costs. The construction cost per km of a high speed railway line changes dramatically depending on geographicconditions and the crossing of urban areas. Values go from 12 million in Spain to 45 million in the Netherlands (Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2004; Barr?n de Angoiti, 2004).

There is not enough demand for HSR – their authors exaggerate the benefits.

De Rugy, 1/10 (Veronique, senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, PhD in economics from University of Paris 1Pantheon-Sorbonne, “High-speed Rail to Nowhere,” 1/10/12, http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/287697/high-speed-rail-nowhere-veronique-de-rugy] MWH

And yet these projects looked good on paper. That’s not surprising, considering that inaccurate estimates of demand plague infrastructure projects. A study of 208 projects in 14 nations on five continents shows that nine out of ten rail projects overestimate actual traffic. Moreover, 84 percent of rail-passenger forecasts are wrong by more than 20 percent. Thus, for rail, passenger traffic averages 51.4 percent less than estimated traffic. This means that there is a systematic tendency to overestimate rail revenues.The same body of work has also shown that project promoters routinely ignore, hide, or otherwise leave out important project costs and risks to make total costs appear lower. Researchers refer to this as the “planning fallacy” or the “optimism bias.” Scholars have also found that it can be politically rewarding to lie about the costs and benefits of such projects. The data show that the political process is more likely to give funding to managers who underestimate the costs and overestimate the benefits. In other words, it is not the best projects that get implemented, but the ones that look the best on paper.

HSR cannot replace driving.

Nusca, ’09 (Andrew, journalist, graduate of New York University and Columbia, “Is high-speed rail worth it in the U.S.?” <http://www.smartplanet.com/blog/smart-takes/is-high-speed-rail-worth-it-in-the-us/139>, 8/4/09] MWH

The only snag?Some of the suggested railway corridors (as shown in the above graphic) aren’t exactly “a few steps” away, as President Obama has publicly stated. Glaser uses Texas as an example:“Driving will continue to be extremely attractive for travelers who want to save parking fees and need cars once they arrive….the new rail line [would be] about as popular as all airplane flights [in that area].”

Not enough demand for HSR

**De Rus and Nombela, ’07** (Ginés, Dept. of Applied Economic Analysis at Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gustavo, Chair of Infrastructure Economics, PhD in Economics from London School of Economics, Professor at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy,* Vol. 41, No. 1, Jan. 2007, JSTOR] MWH

From actual construction, rolling stock, maintenance and operating costs of European HSR lines, average values of time, a reasonable range of potential travel time savings, and a 5 per cent discount rate, we have found that HSR investment is difficult to justify when the expected firstyear demand is below 8-10 million passengers for a line of 500 km, an optimal length for HSR to compete with road and air transport (assuming that the volume of demand is high enough to get a low average fixed cost, or alternatively HSR fares are subsidised). The demand thresholds are based on the lack ofadditional benefits, such as a reduction of reported in this paper congestion and accidents, orindirect effects not accounted for in the reduction of the generalised costsof travel. In the case of particular projects in congested corridors, or where new capacity is needed as an alternative to highways, investment in HSR could be socially profitable with lower demand levels than those estimated in this paper. In any case, before building new HSR lines, these projects should ideally be compared with other alternative investments or policies, which could yield better social outcomes.

Even lower prices can’t attract poorer riders or replace existing transportation.

**De Rus and Nombela, ’07** (Ginés, Dept. of Applied Economic Analysis at Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gustavo, Chair of Infrastructure Economics, PhD in Economics from London School of Economics, Professor at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy,* Vol. 41, No. 1, Jan. 2007, JSTOR] MWH

Development benefits of HSR investments are context-specific2 and the spatial location effects ambiguous. Reduction in transport costs changes the balance between dispersion and agglomeration forces and affects the spatial location of activities. Even in the case of net efficiency gains derivedfrom new HSR infrastructure it is not obvious that lower transport cost willbenefit the poorer regions.Puga (2002) points out that roads and rail linescan be used to travel both ways and it is not obvious that lower transportcosts will facilitate convergence.3 Duranton and Puga (2001), Puga (2002), and Vickerman et al. (1999) suggest that HSR lines will probably reinforce the main nodes of the network, with [have] little effect between nodes.

Downtown HSR will serve few people.

O’Toole, ’10 [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Rail,” <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/high-speed-rail/>, June 2010] MWH

The assumption that people will want to go where new high-speed train lines would go is a big risk. New rail lines would likely go from downtown to downtown, but downtowns have been losing their importance as job centers for decades. While many people travel between, say, the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas, that does not mean that they travel between downtowns, which will be the primary points served by rail. Jobs and people are spread throughout modern cities in a fine-grained pattern. As economist William Bogart observes, only about 10 to 15 percent of metropolitan jobs are located in central city downtowns—in Los Angeles it is less than 5 percent.46 Even when suburban downtowns are counted—only a small fraction of which would be served by high-speed rail—the total is still only 30 to 40 percent.47 That means that most people won't find high-speed rail convenient for business travel.

# Cost

HSR can’t cover costs – this will force enormous government subsidies.

Samuelson, ’11 (Robert, columnist, BA from Harvard, “High Speed Rail a Fast Track to Waste,” <http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/02/14/high_speed_rail_a_fast_track_to_waste_98869.html>, 2/14/11] MWH

High-speed rail would transform Amtrak's small drain into a much larger drain. Once built, high-speed-rail systems would face a dilemma. To recoup initial capital costs - construction and train purchases - ticket prices would have to be set so high that few people would choose rail. But lower prices, even with favorable passenger loads, might not cover costs. Government would be stuck with huge subsidies.Even without recovering capital costs, high-speed-rail systems would probably run in the red. Most mass-transit systems, despite high ridership, routinely have deficits.

# A2: Investment

Investment doesn’t solve – funding will be directed elsewhere

**Goodman, ’10** (Josh, Associate Professor of Public Policy @ Harvard, PhD in economics from Columbia, “High-Speed Rail: Transit Solution or Fiscal Disaster?” May 2010, <http://www.governing.com/topics/economic-dev/High-Speed-Rail-Transit-Solution.html>] MWH

The federal stimulus package included billions in grants to states to build high-speed rail – or at least higher – speed rail. In reality, most of the money will fund things like additional tracks, upgraded signaling systems and improved grade crossings. Trains will travel somewhat faster, but they won't be anything close to high-speed by international standards.

Subsidies do nothing to improve HSR business.

Samuelson, ’11 (Robert, columnist, BA from Harvard, “High Speed Rail a Fast Track to Waste,” <http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/02/14/high_speed_rail_a_fast_track_to_waste_98869.html>, 2/14/11] MWH

Rail buffs argue that subsidies for passenger service simply offset the huge government support of highways and airways. The subsidies "level the playing field." Wrong. In 2004, the Transportation Department evaluated federal transportation subsidies from 1990 to 2002. It found passenger rail service had the highest subsidy ($186.35 per thousand passenger-miles) followed by mass transit ($118.26 per thousand miles). By contrast, drivers received no net subsidy; their fuel taxes more than covered federal spending. Subsidies for airline passengers were about $5 per thousand miles traveled. (All figures are in inflation-adjusted year 2000 dollars.)

# A2: National Funding

Theplan cannot be carried out – governors reject funding.

University of Chicago Urban Network, ’11 (Community of scholars aiming to spur innovation in the study of urban processes and encourage interdisciplinary discourse in urban research theory, and policy, “Would High Speed Rail Benefit Cities?” <http://www.urbanportal.org/issues/entry/would_high_speed_rail_benefit_cities>, 4/4/11] MWH

But opposition has also been substantial. Florida governor Rick Scott officially declined the $2 billion in federal funding awarded for a high-speed rail line between Orlando and Tampa. The governor’s decision was a serious setback for high-speed rail. Because the expected line would have been relatively short and since the state of Florida owns most of the railroad right-of-ways along the proposed path, planners had estimated that the line could have been completed as early as 2015. This early achievement was intended to set the stage for future successes on larger-scale projects. Since the Orlando-Tampa line will no longer be built, the first high-speed train will not launch for many years, which may further erode public support for these projects.

Even with funding, HSR will kill states’ already tight budgets.

Samuelson, ’11 (Robert, columnist, BA from Harvard, “High Speed Rail a Fast Track to Waste,” <http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/02/14/high_speed_rail_a_fast_track_to_waste_98869.html>, 2/14/11] MWH

Vice President Biden, an avowed friend of good government, is giving it a bad name. With great fanfare, he went to Philadelphia last week to announce that the Obama administration proposes spending $53 billion over six years to construct a "national high-speed rail system." Translation: The administration would pay states $53 billion to build rail networks that would then lose money - lots - thereby aggravating the budget squeezes of the states or federal government, depending on which covered the deficits. There's something wildly irresponsible about the national government undermining states' already poor long-term budget prospects by plying them with grants that provide short-term jobs. Worse, the rail proposal casts doubt on the administration's commitment to reducing huge budget deficits. The president's 2012 budget is due Monday. How can it subdue deficits if it keeps proposing big spending programs?

\*\*\*A2: Environment Adv

# IL Defense

No internal link: HSR produces more pollution that it saves.

O’Toole, ’11 [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Pork,” <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/259618/high-speed-pork-randal-otoole>, 2/14/11] MWH

The environmental benefits of high-speed rail would be negligible at best. President Obama'smoderate-speed trains are expected to be powered by diesel locomotives, which burn petroleum and emit pollutants and greenhouse gases. Even electrically powered, true high-speed rail is unlikely to be clean. California rated its proposal as environmentally sound only by projecting impossibly high ridership numbers and unrealistically assuming that future automobiles and airplanes would be no more energy-efficient than they are today.In 2005, Florida's High-Speed Rail Authority proposed a 125-mph rail line between Tampa and Orlando. The environmental impact statement for the proposal estimated that the trains would produce more nitrogen oxide pollution and volatile organic compounds than would be saved by the automobiles taken off the road.35 It also calculated that operating and maintaining the gas-turbine locomotives would consume 3.5 to 6.0 times as much energy as would be saved by the cars replaced.36 The statement concluded that "the environmentally preferred alternative is the No Build Alternative" because it "would result in less direct and indirect impact to the environment."37

High-speed rail doesn’t alter environmentally dangerous behavior.

Samuelson, ’11 (Robert, columnist, BA from Harvard, “High Speed Rail a Fast Track to Waste,” <http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/02/14/high_speed_rail_a_fast_track_to_waste_98869.html>, 2/14/11] MWH

It's a triumph of fancy over fact. Even if ridership increased fifteenfold over Amtrak levels, the effects on congestion, national fuel consumption and emissions would still be trivial. Land-use patterns would change modestly, if at all; cutting 20 minutes off travel times between New York and Philadelphia wouldn't much alter real estate development in either. Nor is high-speed rail a technology where the United States would likely lead; European and Asian firms already dominate the market.

Future technology solves environmental damage.

O’Toole, ’10 [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Rail,” <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/high-speed-rail/>, June 2010] MWH

In considering the costs and benefits of high-speed rail, fast trains should be compared not to today's cars and planes, but to tomorrow's more efficient cars and planes. If automakers are able to meet the administration's latest fuel-economy targets, and consumers continue to replace the nation's auto fleet at the usual rate, cars and light trucks on the road in 2020 will be almost 25 percent more energy efficient than they are today, on average, and by 2030 they will be 38 percent more fuel-efficient. Meanwhile, the energy efficiency of air travel has increased an average 2 percent per year since 1980.39 Boeing promises that its 787 plane will be 20 percent more fuel efficient than comparable planes today.40 Jet engine makers have set a goal of doubling fuel efficiency by 2020.41

HSR’s environmental benefits are ineffective.

**Glaeser 9** (9/4/09) Professor of Economics at Harvard University, director of the Taubman Center for State and Local Government and the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston. http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/running-the-numbers-on-high-speed-trains/

Trains reduce carbon emissions and the world should reduce its carbon footprint, but those two facts don’t make the case for rail. Trains make sense only if they are a cost-effective means of reducing carbon in the atmosphere, or whether the social benefit of eliminating 113 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions can outweigh the costs of rail.

A recent review article looked at the dollar cost to the world of each additional ton of carbon dioxide emissions. Most estimates found that a ton of carbon dioxide causes less than $20 worth of damage. Put another way, eliminating a ton of carbon dioxide would bring about $20 worth of benefits. (The one big outlier to these estimates, the Stern Report, shows the benefits of reducing carbon dioxide to be $85 a ton, but that figure has been widely disputed.)

A better way to evaluate the benefit of reducing carbon emissions by rail is to look at the cost of reducing carbon emissions by means other than rail. In current carbon offset markets, the average price of an offset is $7.34 for each ton of carbon dioxide. Technologies like carbon capture and sequestration seem to offer the possibility of reducing emissions for less than $50 a ton of carbon dioxide emissions eliminated.

I’ll assume an environmental benefit of $50 for eliminating a ton of carbon dioxide emissions. With this figure, the total global-warming-related benefit of 1.5 million high-speed riders taken equally from cars and planes is $4.24 million a year.

**Environmental benefits are exaggerated**

**O'Toole 8** (10/31/08) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow, High-Speed Rail: The Wrong Road for America, http://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/highspeed-rail-wrong-road-america

In the face of high energy prices and concerns about global warming, environmentalists and planners offer high-speed rail as an environmentally friendly alternative to driving and air travel. California, Florida, the Midwest, and other parts of the country are actively considering specific high-speed rail plans.

Close scrutiny of these plans reveals that they do not live up to the hype. As attractive as 110-to 220-mile-per-hour trains might sound, even the most optimistic forecasts predict they will take few cars off the road. At best, they will replace for profit private commuter airlines with heavily subsidized public rail systems that are likely to require continued subsidies far into the future.

Nor are high-speed rail lines particularly environmentally friendly. Planners have predicted that a proposed line in Florida would use more energy and emit more of some pollutants than all of the cars it would take off the road. California planners forecast that high-speed rail would reduce pollutionand greenhouse gas emissions by a mere 0.7 to 1.5 percent—but only if ridership reached the high end of projected levels. Lower ridership would nullify energy savings and pollution reductions.

These assessments are confirmed by the actual experience of high-speed rail lines in Japan and Europe. Since Japan introduced high-speed bullet trains, passenger rail has lost more than half its market share to the automobile. Since Italy, France, and other European countries opened their high-speed rail lines, rail's market share in Europe has dwindled from 8.2 to 5.8 percent of travel. If high-speed rail doesn't work in Japan and Europe, how can it work in the United States?

As megaprojects—the California high-speed rail is projected to cost $33 to $37 billion—high-speed rail plans pose serious risks for taxpayers. Costs of recent rail projects in Denver and Seattle are running 60 to 100 percent above projections. Once construction begins, politicians will feel obligated to throw good taxpayers' money after bad. Once projects are completed , most plans call for them to be turned over to private companies that will keep any operational profits,while taxpayers will remain vulnerable if the trains lose money.

In short, high-speed rail proposals are high cost, high-risk megaprojects that promise little or no congestion relief, energy savings, or other environmental benefits. Taxpayers and politicians should be wary of any transportation projects that cannot be paid for out of user fees.

# IL Offence

High-speed rail is less energy-efficient than alternative travel.

O’Toole, ’11 [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Pork,” <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/259618/high-speed-pork-randal-otoole>, 2/14/11] MWH

Nor will high-speed rail offer any environmental benefits.The average intercity auto trip today uses less energy per passenger mile than the average Amtrak train. While it takes a lot of energy to move trains 150 miles per hour or more, autos are getting cleaner and more energy-efficient every year, so by 2025 the average car will be greener than the most efficient train.

HSR does not solve, devastates environment.

**O'Toole 8** (10/31/08) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow, High-Speed Rail: The Wrong Road for America, http://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/highspeed-rail-wrong-road-america

Saving energy and reducing pollution are worthy goals, and if high-speed trains could achieve these goals, the president's plan might be a good one. But since they cannot, it isn't.

Obama's proposal should really be called "moderate-speed rail." His $13 billion won't fund 200-mile-per-hour bullet trains. Instead, it is mostly about running Amtrak trains a little faster on existing freight lines.

Outside of the Boston-Washington corridor, the fastest Amtrak trains have top speeds of about 80 to 90 miles per hour and average speeds of 40 to 50 miles per hour. Obama proposes to boost top speeds to 110 miles per hour in some places, which means average speeds no greater than 70 to 75 miles per hour.

This is not an innovation. The Milwaukee Road, Santa Fe and other railroads routinely ran trains at those speeds 70 years ago — and still couldn't compete against cars and airlines.

Moderate-speed trains will be diesel powered. They will consume oil and emit toxic and greenhouse gases, just like cars and planes.

According to the Department of Energy, the average Amtrak train uses about 2,700 British thermal units (BTUs) of energy per passenger mile. This is a little better than cars (about 3,400 BTUs per passenger mile) or airplanes (about 3,300 BTUs per passenger mile). But auto and airline fuel efficiencies are improving by 2 percent to 3 percent per year (for example, a Toyota Prius uses less than 1,700 BTUs per passenger mile).

By contrast, Amtrak's fuel efficiency has increased by just one-tenth of 1 percent per year in the past 10 years.

This means, over the lifetime of an investment in moderate-speed trains, the trains won't save any energy at all. In fact, to achieve higher speeds, moderate-speed trains will require even more energy than conventional trains and probably much more than the average car or airplane 10 or 20 years from now.

**HSR does not solve, devastates environment.**

**O'Toole 11** [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Pork,” <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/259618/high-speed-pork-randal-otoole>, 2/14/11]

President Obama's high-speed-rail proposal will, over the course of six years, pour $53 billion of taxpayer money into a megaproject that produces little value for the vast majority of Americans. It uses the classic pork-barrel strategy of starting a program small and then expanding it after Congress, prodded by special-interest groups, is fully committed.

Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood admits Obama's 25-year plan to extend high-speed train service to 80 percent of Americans will cost $500 billion, which means after six years, spending will have to increase to $24 billion a year. While this will please construction and engineering firms, the rest of us will get little other than the satisfaction of knowing our trains go as fast as those in France and China (though less than half as fast as planes).

The real value of any new transportation technology comes from the new mobility it creates. For example, the average American travels 4,000 miles and ships 2,000 ton-miles of goods per year on interstate freeways, virtually none of which took place before the interstates were built. That new mobility helped people reach jobs and other opportunities and ship products that might never have existed without the interstates.

\*\*\*A2: Econ Adv

# IL Defense

High-speed rail provides little immediate stimulus.

Johnson, 1/17 (Fawn, Correspondent for the National Journal, “High-Speed Rail in a Coma,” <http://transportation.nationaljournal.com/2012/01/highspeed-rail-in-a-coma.php>, 1/17/12] MWH

High-speed rail investments aren't like economic stimulus programs, which are intended to jump start shovel-ready projects that can immediately inject money into a local economy while delivering jobs and paved roads.The initial costs of developing high-speed rail lines are high, and the yield time is years or decades. Is the country ready for long-term investments like that? Or would it make sense to take a break and allow the economy to recover before proposing big new rail projects? What would make policymakers more receptive to high-speed rail? What critiques of high-speed rail are the most in need of a response?

No internal link – HSR creates no new mobility.

O’Toole, ’11 [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Pork,” <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/259618/high-speed-pork-randal-otoole>, 2/14/11] MWH

The real value of any new transportation technology comes from the new mobility it creates. For example, the average American travels 4,000 miles and ships 2,000 ton-miles of goods per year on interstate freeways, virtually none of which took place before the interstates were built. That new mobility helped people reach jobs and other opportunities and ship products that might never have existed without the interstates. In contrast, high-speed trains will produce almost no new mobility — in fact, they could suppress freight mobility, which is why the freight railroads are resisting government plans to use their tracks for high-speed passenger trains in North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington. The Florida Department of Transportation predicts 96 percent of the people riding its proposed Tampa-to-Orlando high-speed train would otherwise drive; only 4 percent will be new travelers. With 50 million people visiting Central Florida each year, high-speed rail will increase business by less than .25 percent.Similarly, the California High-Speed Rail Authority predicts 98 percent of the riders on its proposed San Francisco–to–Los Angeles high-speed trains would otherwise drive or fly. With only 2 percent new travel, the trains will create almost no new economic opportunities.

No internal link – the trains will be costly and lack innovation.

O’Toole, ’10 [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Rail,” <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/high-speed-rail/>, June 2010] MWH

While the Obama administration has started funding high-speed rail, it has no detailed financial plan, no cost estimates for the proposed system, no source of long-term funding, and no expectation that passenger fares will cover all of the operating costs or any of the capital costs. Only two high-speed rail routes in the world, Tokyo-Osaka and Paris-Lyon, earn enough revenues to cover capital and operating costs.4 The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) plan, upon which the Obama administration is basing its high-speed rail ideas, could more accurately be titled "moderate-speed rail."5 For the most part, it calls for trains running no faster than 110 miles per hour, which high-speed rail aficionados do not even consider to be true high-speed rail. Such trains would hardly be innovative: starting in the 1930s, several American railroads regularly operated passenger trains at top speeds of 110 miles per hour or more.Yet those fast trains did not stop the decline of passenger trains after World War II. Amtrak today runs trains at top speeds of 100 miles per hour or more in several corridors, but top speeds are far greater than average speeds. For example, the average speed in the Boston-to-Washington corridor is less than 85 miles per hour.

HSR won’t benefit economy.

**Glaeser 9** (9/4/09) Professor of Economics at Harvard University, director of the Taubman Center for State and Local Government and the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston. http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/running-the-numbers-on-high-speed-trains/

Any transportation investment can create large economic ripples 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. For example, in Spain, the city of Ciudad Real seems to have gotten a big lift thanks to high-speed rail because people can now live in Ciudad Real, where housing is cheaper, and commute into Madrid.

This logic has led some to think that high-speed rail will do wonders transforming Buffalo into a back office for Manhattan. Buffalo is 376 miles from Manhattan, so a 150-mile-an-hour rail line will take two and a half hours, which is not going to be significantly faster than air. Moreover, vast amounts of low-cost space are closer to Manhattan than the shores of Lake Erie. Faster connections between Buffalo and Toronto might do more, but in that case speed is hampered by the burdens of border crossing.

Philadelphia is the more natural beneficiary of high-speed rail access to Manhattan; there are already people who live in Philadelphia and commute to New York. Yet even in this most propitious setting, the coming of Acela seems to have had little impact on the population decline of Philadelphia or growth of Wilmington. Perhaps the absence of any trend break in population growth around 2000 just reflects the incremental nature of the Acela investment, but there is little here to bring confidence that rail lines revitalize cities.

Moreover, I don’t see why is it in the national interest to disperse economic activity from Manhattan to Buffalo or Philadelphia. I have long argued that the economic case for directing economic aid to declining regions is weak.

High speed rail will have vastly less benefit than interstate system.

**O'Toole 9** (9/9/09) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow

The administration has likened President Obama's high-speed rail plan to President Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System. Yet there are crucial differences between interstate highways and high-speed rail.

First, before Congress approved the Interstate Highway System, it had a good idea how much it would cost. In contrast, Congress approved $8 billion for high-speed rail without knowing the total cost, which is likely to be at least $90 billion.

Second, highway users paid for interstate highways, whereas high-speed rail will be almost entirely subsidized by general taxpayers who will rarely use it.

Third, interstate highways connect all 48 contiguous states and major metropolitan areas. The FRA's high-speed rail plan consists of six unconnected networks that reach only 33 states and less than two-thirds of the nation's 100 largest urban areas.

Fourth, the average American traveled 4,000 miles on interstates in 2007. High-speed rail proponents optimistically estimate that the average American would ride the FRA's high-speed rail system less than 60 miles per year.

Finally, interstate highways improved social welfare by increasing highway safety. In contrast, far from saving energy and reducing pollution, high-speed rail would actually increase energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

For all these reasons, the United States government should not fund high-speed rail. The $8 billion in high-speed rail stimulus funds should be invested in safety improvements, not in new trains and new routes that will add to future taxpayer obligations

HSR does not have beneficial effects on American or world economy.

**O'Toole 10** [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Rail,” <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/high-speed-rail/>, June 2010]

This past Tuesday, Amtrak proposed to spend more than $100 billion increasing the top speeds of trains in its Boston-to-Washington corridor from 150 to 220 miles per hour. In August, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood estimated that President Obama's proposal to extend high-speed rail to other parts of the country will cost at least $500 billion.

No one knows where this money will come from, but President Obama argues that we need to spend it because high-speed rail will have a "transformative effect" on the American economy. In fact, all it will do is drag the economy down.

The history of transportation shows that we adopt new technologies when they are faster, more convenient, and less expensive than the technologies they replace. High-speed rail is slower than flying, less convenient than driving, and far more expensive than either one. As a result, it will never serve more than a few marginal travelers.

New transportation technologies have a truly transformative effect when they not only replace older technologies but also increase total mobility. Intercity passenger trains, electric streetcars, and mass-produced automobiles offered their customers thousands of miles per year of new mobility. This gave people access to jobs, resources, and opportunities that were previously unavailable.

**HSR doesn’t work mathematically.**

**O'Toole 10** (10/1/10) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow

Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Rail,” <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/high-speed-rail/>, June 2010]

At an inflation-adjusted cost of about $450 billion paid out of highway user fees, the Interstate Highway System, to which high-speed rail is sometimes compared, provides more than 4,000 miles of passenger travel for every American, miles that Americans were not traveling before the system was built. By comparison, a $600 billion expenditure on high-speed rail will provide, at best, around 300 miles of travel per person.

More to the point, most of that travel will not be new travel, but merely a substitute for driving, flying, or other existing forms of travel. The California High-Speed Rail Authority predicts that 98% of its customers will shift from driving or flying. Florida predicts that 96% of the people using its high-speed train will switch from driving.

Almost no new travel means almost no transformative effect. Few people will use high-speed rail or urban rail transit to access new markets, resources, or jobs. Merely substituting rail for other modes will be extremely expensive.

Amtrak brags that its high-speed Acela between Boston and Washington covers its operating costs, though not its capital costs. It does so, however, only by collecting fares of about 75 cents per passenger mile. By comparison, airline fares average only 13 cents a passenger mile, and intercity buses (which, Amtrak doesn't want you to know, carry about three times as many passengers between Boston and Washington as the Acela) are even less expensive.

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Americans spent about $950 billion on driving in 2008. This allowed us to travel, says the Federal Highway Administration, more than 2.7 trillion vehicle miles, for an average cost of about 35 cents per vehicle mile. Since the California High-Speed Rail Authority estimates cars in intercity travel carry an average of 2.4 people, the average cost is less than 15 cents a passenger mile.

# IL Offence

HSR is a costly project likely to lose money.

De Rus, ’12 (Ginés, Dept. of Applied Economic Analysis at University of Las Palmas, “The Economic Effects of High Speed Rail Investment,” Joint Transport Research Centre, <http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/jtrc/discussionpapers/dp200816.pdf>, May 2012] MWH

The engineering of HSR is complicated but its economics is very simple. High proportion offixed and sunk costs, indivisibilities, long life and asset specificity make this public investment risky,with a very wide range of values for the average cost per passenger-trip. The social profitability of investing public money in this technology depends in principle on the volume of demand to be transported and the incremental user benefit with respect to available competing alternatives. The lack of private participation in HSR projects increases the risk of losing money; or reworded in more precise terms, of losing the net benefits in the best alternative use of public funds. HSR investment may be adequate for some corridors, with capacity problems in their railway networks or with road and airport congestion, but its convenience is closely related to the mentioned conditions and the volume of demand to be attended. Moreover, even in the case of particularlyfavourable conditions, the net present value of HSR investment has to be compared with other `do something´ alternatives as road or airport pricing and/or investment, upgrading of conventional trains, etc. When the investment cost associated to new HSR lines does not pass any market test, and thevisibility is reduced by industry propaganda, short-term political interests and subsidized rail fares,conventional cost-benefit analysis can help to distinguish good projects from simple `white elephants´.

\*\*\*A2: Oil Dependence Adv

**High speed rail will have massive cost overruns.**

**Glaeser 9** (9/4/09) Professor of Economics at Harvard University, director of the Taubman Center for State and Local Government and the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston. http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/running-the-numbers-on-high-speed-trains/

I estimated that if the rail link had the same ridership as all airlines now connecting the two cities (1.5 million), then annual costs would exceed the direct benefits to riders by $546 million. In another post, I estimated the environmental and other social benefits from 1.5 million riders to be $21.6 million, excluding the environmental costs of building the rail line.

These numbers suggest that costs will exceed benefits each year by $524 million if the rail line has 1.5 million customers, and by $401 million if the region’s rail demand has a huge rate of growth and attracts three million riders.

# IL Defence

No Decrease in Foreign oil Dependence from High Speed Rail

**Kaufmann 10** [Kaufmann, Larry. "What's Wrong with High Speed Rail."*Isthmus.com*. The Daily Page, 23 Sept. 2010. Web. <http://www.isthmus.com/isthmus/article.php?article=30606>.] CSS

Despite these drawbacks, the Madison-Milwaukee line has vocal supporters. They argue that trains reduce energy use, dependence on foreign oil and greenhouse gas emissions. But this planned high-speed line will use diesel fuel, which comes from petroleum.

Meanwhile, a 2010 Berkeley study shows that high-speed lines must run for 71 years (with half the seats occupied) to reduce greenhouse gases by the amount of emissions that are created by constructing the line.High-speed rail can therefore easily increase greenhouse gases, particularly if few commuters switch from driving to trains.

Proponents also claim high-speed rail leads to economic development. Yet the state's rail application projects only 55 permanent new jobs will be created — not a lot of bang for a billion bucks.

And studies find rail projects only help areas receiving funds. For example, there may be new retail shops and restaurants near train stations, but the value of property near tracks almost invariably declines because of noise, pollution and related problems.

Finally, in what may be the least persuasive argument of all, rail advocates tout the benefits of enhanced "connectivity" between Wisconsin's major cities. In an age of instant communication, it's difficult to see how a new rail line that compares unfavorably with existing transport options will lead to increased information flows or other "synergies" that create new business.

Proponents counter that scientists and venture capitalists won't take the bus but would ride a train between Madison and Milwaukee. Even if this doesn't strike you as farfetched, Wisconsin's waitresses, teachers and dairy farmers shouldn't have to pay higher taxes to subsidize the travel of a small number of upper-income workers just so they can avoid a 90-minute drive or the indignity of being seen on a bus.

The interests lobbying for rail subsidies are highly disciplined and well funded. For example, a U.S. Mayor's Report on four planned high-speed train lines was prepared by the Siemens Corp., a contractor and supplier of rail equipment. There is not even a pretense of objectivity in Siemens' report, which promotes the company's products so shamelessly it would make a 1950s tobacco executive blush.

Scott Walker, the Republican candidate for governor, has vowed not to take federal funds if elected, but instead use available funds for road and bridge repair. This isn't, as Marc Eisen suggested, a retreat from previous GOP rail support; it's a better policy choice.

Transportation is critical to economic vitality and our quality of life, but it doesn't make sense to fund an unnecessary rail project that will burden Wisconsin taxpayers for decades to come. Let's hope this is one train that goes off track.

High Speed Rail is glorified

**Furchtgott-Roth 11** [Diana is a former chief economist at the U.S. Department of Labor. "Cut, Don't Promote, High-speed Rail." *Washingtonexaminer.com*. The Washington Examiner, 10 Feb. 2011. Web. <http://washingtonexaminer.com/article/39086>.] CSS

The administration claims that high-speed rail would be faster, cheaper and easier than building more freeways or adding to an already overburdened aviation system -- but has published no supporting analysis. Potential benefits cited are job creation; decreased traffic congestion; reduced dependence on oil; increased rural development; and a potentially rich new market for rail equipment makers. Proponents of high-speed rail have exaggerated its benefits. Much railroad equipment is imported. Transportation jobs can be created through expansion of highways, using private funding from tolls rather than taxpayer dollars. And additional high-speed rail is unlikely to ease traffic congestion, because traffic congestion occurs within cities, rather than outside them. Evidence from Japan and Europe indicates that expansion of rail does not stop increases in road transportation and **would not reduce dependence on foreign oil.**In fact, the opposite has occurred. Since high-speed rail was built, rail has lost market share to cars. Obstacles to high-speed rail, as well as funding, include the lengthy environmental review and approval process for construction; and technology requirements for separate rights of way for high-speed rail.

Reducing oil Imports not Reasonable

**Adler 11** [Ben writes on national politics and domestic policy. Adler, Ben. "A Broad-Based Solution to Our Energy Problem." *Prospect.org*. The American Prospect, 20 Apr. 2011. Web. <http://prospect.org/article/broad-based-solution-our-energy-problem>.] CSS

With instability in the Arab world causing oil prices to surge, and Republicans proposing, with typical venality and idiocy, to solve the problem through either rampant domestic oil drilling or stealing the oil in Iraq and Libya, President Barack Obama is striking a more reasoned tone. In a recent speech at Georgetown University, the president proposed reducing America's foreign oil imports by one-third by 2025. In itself, this sounds like a worthy goal, but given the breadth of the environmental and economic problems that our oil consumption causes, it's unambitious at best. Part of the problem is that Obama's approach is entirely conventional. He calls for reductions in oil use through boosting alternative-energy sources like natural gas and biofuels and increasing domestic oil production. This shows a fatal flaw in Obama's conception of the problem. He views our massive oil consumption as an issue that should be solved through energy policy. In fact, the real solutions to our energy problems lie in other policy areas: transportation, education, housing, and urban development. When Republicans chant "drill baby, drill" and the country's leading Democrat responds with "drill but also build solar panels" as an opening offer rather than a final compromise, the whole debate is skewed rightward. Our reliance on oil is a problem caused by excessive demand, not inadequate supply. The way to solve such a problem is not to scurry in vain to produce enough oil to match demand -- an exercise akin to running in quicksand -- but to reduce demand. And to do that requires changing rules that no president has ever identified as falling under energy policy at all. Our rapacious oil consumption results from decisions made long ago, especially when it comes to transportation. According to the World Resources Institute, in 2005 the U.S. consumed 1,618.6 litres of petroleum per person; Japan and Germany -- two nations with robust automobile industries -- used around a quarter of that per person compared with the U.S. It's not that Americans can't enjoy the benefits of building or owning cars but the U.S. has unwisely encouraged development patterns that forced us to drive everywhere and to drive longer distances.Because of this, the U.S. has set lower taxes on gasoline compared to other developed nations, and we use the revenue to build roads -- about 80 percent of federal transportation dollars go to highways -- rather than subways and regional rail lines. We need to raise the federal gas tax, which hasn't even risen to keep pace with inflation since 1993, and reapportion the way we spend that revenue.

\*\*\*Off-Case Links

# Ptx

High speed rail is unpopular – oversold, disrupts residential neighborhoods, and provokes public opposition

**Oremus, ’11** [Will, *Slate* staff writer, Master’s in Politics and Government @ Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, “Requiem for a Train,” 12/7/11, <http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technocracy/2011/12/high_speed_rail_is_dead_in_america_should_we_mourn_it_.single.html>] MWH

The project was **oversold** from the beginning, with projections of 100 million riders per year and healthy operating profits—yes, profits, on a railroad—leading to skepticism even among those inclined to support it. Along with the usual conservative opponents, the wealthy liberals living along the railroad’s proposed path in Palo Alto and neighboring cities—sufficiently motivated by the prospect of trains roaringliterally through their backyards—began to uncover holes in the financing scheme as well. Rather than take them seriously, the rail line’s bullheaded backers attempted to steamroll the opposition, branding them NIMBYs and “rotten apples.” Sure, they were NIMBYs, but it didn’t make them wrong. And when they leveraged their connections and media savvy to get state lawmakers, academics, and journalists like me to investigate, the findings that came back damaged the project’s credibility.Under pressure to come up with more realistic projections, state rail authorities admitted last month that the project would take twice as long to build as they’d originally claimed, attract fewer riders, and cost twice as much. The honesty was welcome, but it came too late: A poll released this week showed the public has turned against high-speed rail altogether, with nearly two-thirds saying they’d like a chance to reconsider.

High speed rail is unpopular – Tea Party, wealthy liberals, and GOP opposition

**Oremus, ’11** [Will, *Slate* staff writer, Master’s in Politics and Government @ Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, “Requiem for a Train,” 12/7/11, <http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technocracy/2011/12/high_speed_rail_is_dead_in_america_should_we_mourn_it_.single.html>] MWH

There was a brief burst of enthusiasm around the future of high-speed rail in January 2010, when President Obama announced $8 billion in federal stimulus spending to start building “America’s first nationwide program of high-speed intercity passenger rail service.” Since then, however, the project’s chances of success have been heading in one direction: downhill. First, **Tea Party** conservatives in Florida and **wealthy liberal suburbanites** in the Bay Area began questioning their states’ plans. Then, just as Joe Biden was calling for $53 billion in high-speed-rail spending over the next six years, a crop of **freshly elected Republican governors** turned down billions in federal money for lines in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Florida.Finally, **Republicans in Congress** zeroed out the federal high-speed rail budget last month. (To understand why conservatives hate trains, see my colleague Dave Weigel’s story from earlier this year.) Policymakers' appetite for high-speed rail seems to be dwindling to almost nothing. It is old news that congressional Republicans are not fans of President Obama's high-speed rail initiative. They view it as a waste of taxpayer dollars at a time when belt-tightening is of the highest order. The national conversation has not advanced much beyond that point, perhaps because the biggest fans of high-speed rail are distracted by other problems.Democrats in Congress raised only a faint protest when the fiscal 2012 appropriations bill cut funding for the Transportation Department's high-speed rail program. Republicans who ostensibly like high-speed rail said the cuts will allow rail enthusiasts to start over from scratch.

# Spending

HSR is extremely expensive and can’t survive without government subsidies.

**Dovell, 3/7** (Elizabeth, content writer at Council of Foreign Relations, B.A. in international relations, “U.S. Rail Infrastructure,” CFR, 3/7/12, <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/us-rail-infrastructure/p27585>] MWH

Japan's Shinkansen HSR system, which broke ground in 1964, is the oldest, fastest and highest-volume HSR system in the world. But even as it boasts the highest ridership of any HSR system, the Shinkansen system still does not turn a profit and must rely on government subsidies. Western European countries such as Germany, Spain, and France have been developing their high-speed rail networks for decades, and Spain currently boasts the largest high-speed rail network in Europe. But as in Japan, European HSR systems survive because of government subsidies.

Their cost estimates are wrong – project supporters suffer from optimism bias.

O’Toole, ’10 [Randal, senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of *Gridlock*, “High-Speed Rail,” <http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/high-speed-rail/>, June 2010] MWH

Proponents of high-speed rail projects tend to overstate their benefits and understate their costs. Danish planning professor Bent Flyvbjerg has studied hundreds of government megaprojects, and he argues that project supporters suffer from "optimism bias" regarding the merits of projects, and that they often "strategically misrepresent" project details in order to gain support.30 No high-speed rail line has been built from scratch in the United States. But historically, urban passenger rail projects have, on average, gone 40 percent over their projected costs. At the same time, U.S. passenger rail planners typically overestimate ridership by an average of about 100 percent.31

**Plan has huge gaps, no source of funding.**

**O'Toole 9 O'Toole 9** (5/9/09) Randal O'Toole, Cato Institute Senior Fellow ,High-Speed Rail Is No Solution, http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/highspeed-rail-is-no-solution

The FRA plan also has huge gaps, such as Dallas to Houston, Jacksonville to Orlando, and the entire Rocky Mountains. Once states start building high-speed rail, expect local politicians to demand these gaps be filled at your expense. And don't be surprised when the government asks for billions more in 30 years to rebuild what will then be a worn-out system.

What would taxpayers get for all this money? Unless you live in California and maybe Florida, don't expect superfast bullet trains. In most of the rest of the country, such as between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, the FRA is merely proposing to boost the top speeds of Amtrak trains from 79 mph to 110.

A top speed of 110 mph means average speeds of only 60-70 mph, which is hardly revolutionary. Many American railroads were running trains that fast 70 years ago.