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## **Fast Track America: Why Congress Must Fund High Speed Rail**

Earlier this year, President Obama and Congress demonstrated leadership and vision by jumpstarting high-speed rail in America.

Now it's time to sustain the effort to grow the economy, create green jobs and lessen our dependence on foreign oil.

While the House appropriated \$4 billion in the 2010 transportation appropriations bill (H.R. 3288), the Senate only put \$1.2 billion in its version, an amount insufficient to meet the strong demand for high-speed rail projects in dozens of states. A conference committee is set to finalize the allocation.

History holds a cautionary tale: In 1965, President Johnson and Congress joined forces to successfully create the fastest passenger train in the world. The technology worked, but Congress did not follow through with the funding for high-speed track.

At a time of log-jammed roads and airports, growing harmful emissions and a lack of construction and manufacturing jobs, America simply cannot afford any more false starts on high-speed rail.

### **The demand**

Both the public and the states have showed great interest in high-speed rail as an efficient, environmentally friendly means of moving people and creating economic activity.

Across the country, wherever train service has been boosted, ridership has risen dramatically in response to the increased convenience of schedules and comfort of trains. Acela trains in the Northeast Corridor have grown their share of the air/rail market to 65 percent.

The Federal Rail Administration received applications from 40 states totaling \$103 billion this year, with just \$8 billion allocated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

### **The need**

The \$4 billion request would buy new, high-performance locomotives and passenger cars built in the U.S., better signals, track and grade-crossing upgrades and rail bottleneck removals, all resulting in faster and more convenient travel.

Limited funds should also be allocated to planning new 220-mph tracks linking major metropolitan areas.

To ensure the best use and long-term return on investment of taxpayer dollars, federal funds for upgrades and improvements to 110 mph should be compatible with future upgrades to 220 mph service along key corridors.

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## **Benefits**

High-speed rail offers solutions to our economic, energy environmental problems. It will:

- Put people to work
- Clean our air
- Cut our energy consumption
- Facilitate travel and business
- Assist in the resurgence of American manufacturing

### **Putting people to work**

A 2,250-mile Midwestern high-speed rail network as envisioned under the USDOT's high-speed corridor designations could sustain more than 1 million permanent jobs and create more than 450,000 construction jobs in the region.

Nationwide, the 9,000 miles of USDOT-designated high-speed corridors add up to 4.5 million permanent jobs and 1.6 million construction jobs. That is not counting up to 100,000 jobs relating to the manufacturing of new trains.

### **Boost to the economy**

A study by Transportation Economics & Management Systems has estimated a regional high-speed rail network in the Midwest would generate \$23 billion in economic benefits for that region.

### **Cleaning the air**

High-speed trains are propelled with electricity, cutting down on harmful emissions. High-speed trains eliminate 20 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per mile per year; a 2,250-mile Midwestern high-speed rail network would take 36 billion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> a year out of the atmosphere, the equivalent of 3 million cars off the road according to EPA guidelines. The national network would save roughly 3 times that amount.

### **Cutting energy consumption**

High-speed trains use a third the energy of air travel and one-fifth the energy of car travel. A Midwestern network would reduce independence on foreign oil by as much as 40 million barrels per year. Nationally, high-speed rail oil savings would add up to 125 million barrels.

### **Facilitating travel**

When taking into consideration long trips to and from airports, long waits at the terminals and chronic flight delays, train travel beats the plane in convenience hands down for distances under 500 miles. With more travelers using trains for such trips, airport congestion and delays would decrease, benefiting air travelers as well. That is why every region in the U.S. is planning high-speed rail service.

### **Linking the heartland**

Outside of California, the Midwest has the highest concentration of cities with a population of more than 300,000. Most of those cities – Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Minneapolis, St. Louis and Cincinnati – could be served by a Midwest high-speed rail network. Those metropolitan areas alone represent nearly 10 percent of the U.S. population, and the whole region is home to 1/3 the U.S. population.

### **Reinvigorating U.S. manufacturing**

Congress must demand locomotives and rail stock be manufactured in America. Rail yards already exist around the country in such states California, Illinois, Nebraska, New York and Wisconsin. Just consider the potential: Airbus employs 56,000 people across Europe, while just one European high-speed train manufacturer, Alstom (maker of the TGV), employs 76,000 people alone.

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