High Speed Rail Negative - NCPA

Economy ADV

Economy 1nc

Passenger rail doesn't cause economic boom, costs outweigh

Staley 9(Sam, director of urban growth and land use policy for Reason Foundation, "Why High-Speed Rail Fails as a Jobs Program," August 18 ,http://reason.com/archives/2009/08/18/why-high-speed-rail-fails-as-a)

Of course, rail proponents argue that spending money now on high-speed rail is a long-term investment that will pay off in higher economic productivity over the long-haul. **But** these **job creation and income estimates they use are based on spending for freight rail, not passenger rail**. Freight rail in America is a crucial part of our transportation infrastructure, accounting for 43 percent of the shipment of goods and services from one city to the other. Thus, investments in freight rail have a direct impact on the bottom line for American businesses, increasing the speed and reliability of goods shipment and improving productivity. **Passenger rail in the U.S. is a different story. Passenger rail currently carries a very small portion of city-to-city travel**—the market targeted by high-speed rail—and it's likely to remain modest well into the future. In 2008, Amtrak carried 28.7 million passengers. By comparison, there were 687 million airline passengers in 2008, in part because air service provides frequent high-speed travel to geographically distant cities. **Then there's our well-developed highway network that makes automobiles very competitive with rail for distances under 200 miles**. In most cases, **once travel and wait times to train stations are factored in, travelers will spend as much time in route on the train as they will in a car**. Consider a trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco, or Chicago to St. Louis, for a typical high-speed train traveler. You'll likely have to drive to the train station and pay to park. Once arriving in downtown St. Louis or San Francisco, you will likely have to take a taxi or rent a car to get to your hotel or meeting place (which is likely to be outside the central business district). The reliable, diverse, and nimble transit system that many advocates envision surrounding high-speed rail stations simply doesn't exist in most cities today, limiting the appeal of trains. To compensate for these disadvantages, taxpayers **will have to steeply subsidize train ticket prices for the business travelers and tourists that are most likely to use them. Ultimately, high-speed rail's impacts on American travel patterns and employment productivity are going to be negligible, and the actual job creation potential for high speed rail is much more modest than proponents admit**.

No challengers to US competitiveness

The Economist 08 ("What crisis? Innovation" June 14, 2008, U.S. Edition. Lexis)

Worries that America is losing its edge in science and technology are overblown "THE wolves have not encircled us yet," the Denver Post opined in an article in 2006 entitled "Signs America's Scientific Edge is Slipping", "but there's no denying the sounds of scratching at the door."This was a pithy summary of a mountain of reports from congressional committees, scientific panels and business groups. But a new report from the RAND Corporation's National Defence Research Institute, "US Competitiveness in Science and Technology", suggests that **the panic is overblown.** The report demonstrates that **America is still the world's science and technology powerhouse. It accounts for 40% of total world spending on research and development, and produces 63% of the most frequently cited publications. It is home to 30 of the world's leading 40 universities, and employs 70% of the world's living Nobel** laureates. America produces 38% of patented new technologies in the OECD and employs 37% of the OECD's researchers. There is little evidence that America is resting on its laurels, according to RAND. **Developing countries such as China and India may be boosting their science and technology muscle faster than America. But they are starting from a low base. America is outperforming Europe and Japan on many performance measures**: in 1993-2003 **America's growth rate in patents averaged 6.6% a year compared with 5.1% for the European Union and 4.1% for Japan.** One reason for America's angst was that the growth of federal spending on R&D slowed significantly with the end of the cold war. It only grew by 2.5% a year in 1994-2004 compared with a long-term average of 3.5% since 1953. The trouble with this statistic is that America has lots of sources of R&D spending: federal money accounted for only $86 billion of the $288 billion that it spent on R&D in 2004. Spending on the life sciences is increasing rapidly, a reasonable bet on the future. **Others worry that non-US citizens now account for 41% of science and engineering PhDs. But this is arguably a sign of America's continuing world domination: the world's brightest people are gravitating to the world's best opportunities. A higher proportion than ever of these paragons want to make their homes in the United States.**

Economy 2nc – no econ gain

No short-term stimulus effect –HSR will take decades to complete

Stegemeier 10 – Retired Chairman and CEO of Unocal (Richard, "Richard Stegemeier: High-speed rail economics bleak," Feb 15, http://www.ocregister.com/articles/speed-234453-high-rail.html)

High-speed *rail* *is a wonderful concept because it uses electricity and* **could reduce our dependence on fossil fuels sometime in the distant future. But it's also far more expensive than commercial airlines and will require a new source of electricity** *from solar, wind or nuclear power. The president assures us there will be no pork in the $3.8 trillion federal budget for 2011. That may be true if we ignore the proposed $2.3 billion high-speed-rail grant for California. An undetermined amount of that money would be spent as a down payment on a $42.6 billion proposal to connect Anaheim with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco and Los Angeles with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's Las Vegas. That's an "oink-oink" if I ever heard one. I can understand the Las Vegas high-speed link to accommodate the thousands of Californians who want to flee to Nevada to escape California's high taxes.* **High-speed rail as part of a short-term economic stimulus package is nonsense if it takes a decade or two to build. The environmental impact statement itself will take years*. Acquiring 680 miles of right-of-way will be* contested in thousands of eminent domain lawsuits and will take at least a decade to complete.** *If high-speed rail serves intermediate cities then it will increase travel time, create noise and interrupt traffic flow at thousands of intersections. If it bypasses smaller cities to gain the advantage of speed, then it serves only the end terminals and disadvantages everyone in-between.*

Economy 2nc – competitiveness

No competitiveness arguments – it's a race every country loses

Washington Post 11[February 16, 2011, "A lost cause: The high-speed rail race," http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/16/AR2011021605977.html]

President **Obama's fiscal 2012 budget includes $8 billion for high-speed rail** next year and $53 billion over six years. **In the president's view, the United States needs to spend big on high-speed rail so that we can catch up with Europe, Japan - and** you-know-who. "**China** is building faster trains and newer airports," the president warned in his State of the Union address. But of all the reasons to build high-speed rail in the United States, keeping up with the international Joneses may be one of the worst. **In fact, experience abroad has repeatedly raised questions about the cost-effectiveness of high-speed rail.**China would seem to be an especially dubious role model, given the problems its high-speed rail system has been going through of late. Beijing just fired its railway minister amid corruption allegations; this is the sort of thing that can happen when a government suddenly starts throwing $100 billion at a gargantuan public works project, as China did with rail in 2008. Sleek as they may be, China's new fast trains are too expensive for ordinary workers to ride, so they are not achieving their ostensible goal of moving passengers from the roads to the rails. Last year, the Chinese Academy of Sciences asked the government to reconsider its high-speed rail plans because of the system's huge debts. Of course, if the Chinese do finish their system, it is likely to require operating subsidies for many years - possibly forever. **A recent World Bank report on high-speed rail systems around the world noted that ridership forecasts rarely materialize and warned that "governments contemplating the benefits** of a new high-speed railway, whether procured by public or private or combined public-private project structures, should **also contemplate the near-certainty of copious and continuing budget support for the debt."**That's certainly what happened in Japan, where only a single bullet-train line, between Japan and Osaka, breaks even; it's what happened in France, where only the Paris-Lyon line is in the black. Taiwan tried a privately financed system, but it ended up losing so much money that the government had to bail it out in 2009. **When it comes to high-speed rail, Europe, Japan and Taiwan have two natural advantages over every region of the United States**, with the possible exception of the Northeast Corridor - **high gas taxes and high population density.** If high-speed rail turned into a money pit under relatively favorable circumstances, imagine the subsidies it would require here. Every dollar spent to subsidize high-speed rail is a dollar that cannot be spent modernizing highways, expanding the freight rail system or creating private-sector jobs. **The Obama administration insists we dare not lag the rest of the world in high-speed rail. Actually, this is a race everyone loses.**

Economy 2nc – no terminal impacts

No historical connection between economic collapse and conflict

Ferguson, 06 – M.A., Laurence A. Tisch Professor of History at Harvard University, Resident faculty member of the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Senior Research Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford University, and a Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution, Stanford University (Niall, "The Next War of the World", Foreign Affairs, September-October 2006, May 21st 2010,)

Nor can economic crises explain the bloodshed. What may be the most familiar causal chain in modern historiography links the Great Depression to the rise of fascism and the outbreak of World War II. But that simple story leaves too much out. Nazi Germany started the war in Europe only after its economy had recovered. Not all the countries affected by the Great Depression were taken over by fascist regimes, nor did all such regimes start wars of aggression. In fact, no general relationship between economics and conflict is discernible for the century as a whole. Some wars came after periods of growth, others were the causes rather than the consequences of economic catastrophe, and some severe economic crises were not followed by wars.

Economy 2nc – US not key

US not key to world economy – the housing crisis ended American financial hegemony

Espinoza, 08 (Javier, Forbes.com. “Steinbrueck: U.S. Losing Its Financial Superpowers” http://www.forbes.com/facesinthenews/2008/09/26/steinbrueck-german-minister-face-markets-cx_je_0925autofacescan01.html)

In the light of the financial turmoil on Wall Street, the United States will forfeit its worldwide economic primacy, Germany's outspoken finance minister, Peer Steinbrueck, said Thursday in a speech to his country's legislature. “The U.S. will lose its status as the superpower of the global financial system" Steinbrueck told the lower house of parliament in Berlin. "The long term consequences of the crisis are not yet clear. But one thing seems likely to me: the USA will lose its superpower status in the global financial system. The world financial system is becoming multipolar." He went on to say, "Wall Street will never be the same again. A few days ago there were two Mohicans left remaining out of the investment banks. Now they no longer exist." The finance minister was referring to the sudden transformation of Goldman Sachs (nyse: GS - news - people) and Morgan Stanley (nyse: MS - news - people) into bank holding companies. "The world will never be the same as it was before the crisis. The whole world over we must adjust ourselves to lower rates of growth and--with a time lag--unfavorable developments on labor markets." The center-left politician also said he felt there was no need for Germany or Europe as a whole to imitate the U.S. Treasury's way of dealing with the financial crisis because it is largely an "American problem." The Treasury is proposing to spend about $700 billion to acquire toxic assets from beleaguered banks' balance sheets. A week ago Sunday, Lehman Brothers Holdings filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, while rival Merrill Lynch greed to be bought by Bank of America, as shares in the U.S. banking system plummeted. (See "Wall St. In Turmoil.") Economists in Germany said Steinbrueck's assessment of the future of the United States as an economic superpower has some validity, but it is too early to judge the degree to which the United States' position of centrality in the financial world will erode. Matthias Rubisch, a senior economist at Commerzbank, said, "It is quite clear that the U.S. is losing out in the development of the financial system as banks experience a weak situation, and this will probably continue for some time as other banks from emerging economies gain more importance and grow stronger." But Gernot Griebling, an economist with LBBW, said "it's too early to tell" whether America's financial power will fade."But all the ingredients pointing in that direction are there: financial markets are tumbling, banks are failing, investors are losing confidence in the dollar, the federal reserve is lacking capacity to resolve any kind of problem."

Economy 2nc – resilient

The world economy is more resilient than ever – one issue can't cause economic collapse

Behravesh, 06 (Nariman Chief economist and executive vice prez @ global insight, 2006, "the great shock absorber; Good macroeconomic policies and improved microeconomic flexibility have strengthened the global economy's 'immune system.'", Newsweek, p. lexis)

The U.S. and global economies were able to withstand three body blows in 2005--one of the worst tsunamis on record (which struck at the very end of 2004), one of the worst hurricanes on record and the highest energy prices after Hurricane Katrina--without missing a beat. This resilience was especially remarkable in the case of the United States, which since 2000 has been able to shrug off the biggest stock-market drop since the 1930s, a major terrorist attack, corporate scandals and war. Does this mean that recessions are a relic of the past? No, but recent events do suggest that the global economy's "immune system" is now strong enough to absorb shocks that 25 years ago would probably have triggered a downturn. In fact, over the past two decades, recessions have not disappeared, but have become considerably milder in many parts of the world. What explains this enhanced recession resistance? The answer: a combination of good macroeconomic policies and improved microeconomic flexibility. Since the mid-1980s, central banks worldwide have had great success in taming inflation. This has meant that long-term interest rates are at levels not seen in more than 40 years. A low-inflation and low-interest-rate environment is especially conducive to sustained, robust growth. Moreover, central bankers have avoided some of the policy mistakes of the earlier oil shocks (in the mid-1970s and early 1980s), during which they typically did too much too late, and exacerbated the ensuing recessions. Even more important, in recent years the Fed has been particularly adept at crisis management, aggressively cutting interest rates in response to stock-market crashes, terrorist attacks and weakness in the economy. The benign inflationary picture has also benefited from increasing competitive pressures, both worldwide (thanks to globalization and the rise of Asia as a manufacturing juggernaut) and domestically (thanks to technology and deregulation). Since the late 1970s, the United States, the United Kingdom and a handful of other countries have been especially aggressive in deregulating their financial and industrial sectors. This has greatly increased the flexibility of their economies and reduced their vulnerability to inflationary shocks. Looking ahead, what all this means is that a global or U.S. recession will likely be avoided in 2006, and probably in 2007 as well. Whether the current expansion will be able to break the record set in the 1990s for longevity will depend on the ability of central banks to keep the inflation dragon at bay and to avoid policy mistakes. The prospects look good. Inflation is likely to remain a low-level threat for some time, and Ben Bernanke, the incoming chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, spent much of his academic career studying the past mistakes of the Fed and has vowed not to repeat them. At the same time, no single shock will likely be big enough to derail the expansion. What if oil prices rise to $80 or $90 a barrel? Most estimates suggest that growth would be cut by about 1 percent--not good, but no recession. What if U.S. house prices fall by 5 percent in 2006 (an extreme assumption, given that house prices haven't fallen nationally in any given year during the past four decades)? Economic growth would slow by about 0.5 percent to 1 percent. What about another terrorist attack? Here the scenarios can be pretty scary, but an attack on the order of 9/11 or the Madrid or London bombings would probably have an even smaller impact on overall GDP growth.

The US economy is resilient – financial crisis proves

Bowman, 08 (Michael, VOA news. "Bush Economic Advisor: US Economy Remains Resilient" http://voanews.com/english/2008-10-19-voa24.cfm)

President Bush's top economic advisor says the United States is showing remarkable resiliency during a period of enormous financial turmoil. From Washington, VOA's Michael Bowman reports. Recent weeks have seen Wall Street's main stock index lose about a third of its value after the nation's biggest and best-known financial firms either failed or were bought out. A rash of U.S. home foreclosures is continuing amid rising unemployment and declining consumer spending. Economic growth has slowed to a crawl, and the consensus view among economists is that the nation is entering a recession if it has not done so already. The Chairman of President Bush's Council of Economic Advisors, Ed Lazear, is striking a positive note. "This is an amazingly resilient economy," said Ed Lazear. "We have seen shock after shock [in] the housing market, oil prices going up to near $150 a barrel over the summer, credit markets tighten - all of those things are very difficult to get through, and yet the economy has gotten through it." Lazear was speaking on CNN's Late Edition program. He added that continued tight credit will make for what he termed "difficult months ahead" with higher unemployment. "Some parts of the country have much higher rates of unemployment, and we are seeing what anyone would characterize as a recession in certain parts of the country," he said. "But the hope is that we have taken the steps to get things turned around, and we think we have." Those steps include a massive financial rescue package President Bush signed into law earlier this month. Last week, the president announced the federal government will purchase stock in troubled banks to give them more capital and make it easier for them to lend money so that consumers and businesses can engage in beneficial economic activity. Lazear says there are already signs that banks are willing to lend to each other - the first step in what he hopes will be loosening credit in the country.

Energy ADV

Energy 1nc

Dependence and warming benefits long timeframe

Stegemeier 10(Richard, the Anaheim resident is a retired chairman and CEO of Unocal and a longtime member of the National Academy of Engineering, "Richard Stegemeier: High-speed rail economics bleak," Feb 15, http://www.ocregister.com/articles/speed-234453-high-rail.html)

High-speed rail is a wonderful concept because it uses electricity and **could reduce our dependence on fossil fuels sometime in the distant future. But it's also far more expensive than commercial airlines and will require a new source of electricity** from solar, wind or nuclear power. The president assures us there will be no pork in the $3.8 trillion federal budget for 2011. That may be true if we ignore the proposed $2.3 billion high-speed-rail grant for California. An undetermined amount of that money would be spent as a down payment on a $42.6 billion proposal to connect Anaheim with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco and Los Angeles with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's Las Vegas. That's an "oink-oink" if I ever heard one. I can understand the Las Vegas high-speed link to accommodate the thousands of Californians who want to flee to Nevada to escape California's high taxes. **High-speed rail as part of a short-term economic stimulus package is nonsense if it takes a decade or two to build. The environmental impact statement itself will take years.** Acquiring 680 miles of right-of-way will **be contested in thousands of eminent domain lawsuits and will take at least a decade to complete.** If high-speed rail serves intermediate cities then it will increase travel time, create noise and interrupt traffic flow at thousands of intersections. If it bypasses smaller cities to gain the advantage of speed, then it serves only the end terminals and disadvantages everyone in-between.

CO2 reductions overstated – inconsequential effect on warming

Cox and Vranich '8 (Wendell Cox Principal of Demographia (St. Louis. Mo.), a public policy firm; and Joseph Vranich Consultnt @ National Journal. The California High Speed Rail Proposal: A Due Diligence Report http://reason.org/files/1b544eba6f1d5f9e8012a8c36676ea7e.pdf)

Claims about HSR's environmental benefits have been greatly overstated. California HSR will do little to reduce CO2 emissions (greenhouse gas emissions). Based upon California Air Resources Board projections, **HSR would ultimately remove CO2 emissions equal to only 1.5% of the current state objective. This is a small fraction of the CHSRA's exaggerated claims of "almost 50%"** of the state objective. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has indicated that for between $20 and $50 per ton of reduced greenhouse gases emissions, deep reversal of CO_2 concentrations can be achieved between 2030 and 2050. A McKinsey report indicates that substantial CO_2 emission reductions can be achieved in the United States for less than $50 per ton. Yet **the cost per ton of CO_2 emission removal by HSR is far higher—between 39 and 201 times the international IPCC ceiling of $50. The reality is that HSR's impact on CO_2 would be inconsequential while being exorbitantly costly.** Hence, HSR's CO_2 emission reduction strategy cannot be legitimately included as an element of a rational strategy for reducing GHG emissions. In view of the untenable traffic impact projections and other factors, CHSRA's claims are considered specious. There is a need for an objective, independent assessment of HSR's CO_2 impacts, including both operations and construction. Until such an analysis is completed, CHSRA should cease making any statements about CO_2 or other air quality impacts.

Increases in fuel efficiency solves their internal links – their evidence doesn't assume future gains

O'Toole 10 (Randal, Senior Fellow at Cato Institute, "High Speed Rail," June, http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/high-speed-rail)

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 The California **high-speed rail** authority **claims** that **high-speed trains will produce large energy savings**.42 **Yet the authority's own environmental impact statement (EIS) reveals that the benefits will be negligible**. The EIS projects that the energy savings from operating high-speed rail will repay the energy cost of construction in just five years.43 But **the EIS assumes that the energy efficiency of autos and planes won't improve.**44 **But if,** over the lifetime of a high-speed rail project, **autos and planes become** 30 percent **more fuel efficient, then the energy payback period for high-speed rail rises to 30 years**. Since rail lines require expensive (and energy-intensive) reconstruction about every 30 years, **high-speed rail is not likely to save energy at all**. Steven Polzin, of the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research, points out that automobiles and buses have relatively short life cycles, so they can readily adapt to the need to save energy or reduce pollution. By contrast, he says **rail systems "may be far more difficult or expensive to upgrade to**

newer, more efficient technologies."45 The American auto fleet completely turns over every 18 years, and the airline fleet turns over every 21 years, so both can quickly become more fuel-efficient. With rail lines, however, we are stuck for at least three to four decades with whatever technology is selected.

No significant reduction in oil – electric trains still rely on fossil fuel

Tutton 11 (Mark is a staff writer for CNN.com, a credible news source. "How green is high-speed rail?" http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/18/world/how-green-is-hsr/index.html Nov 19, 2011)

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, **is 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? 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.

High speed rail can't get cars off the road

O'Toole, '09 - American public policy analyst; senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of The Best-Laid Plans: How Government Planning Harms Your Quality of Life, Your Pocketbook, and Your Future (Randal, "The High Cost of High-Speed Rail", America Dream Coalition - Center for Economic Freedom Texas Public Policy Foundation, 8/09, http://www.americandreamcoalition.org/transit/HSRinTX.pdf)//AY

The experiences of cities that have adopted these policies reveal two things. First**, such policies do not significantly reduce driving.** Second, the policies impose very high costs on the cities and urban areas that adopt them.**Within the range of densities found in American urban areas, density alone has trivial effects on the amount of driving people do. Statistically, the correlation between changes in urban densities and changes in per-capita driving is very low, and to the extent there is a correlation, a doubling of urban densities reduces per-capita driving by just 3.4 percent. Nor do so-called transit-oriented developments—high-density, mixed-use developments near transit stations—significantly reduce driving. To the extent that people living in these developments drive less than others, it is because those people want to drive less so they decided to live near a transit line. After that market has been saturated, however, people living in such developments tend to drive as much as anyone else. Surveys have found that people living in Portland-area transit-oriented developments do not use transit significantly more than people in other Portland neighborhoods. Similar results have been found with transit-oriented developments in other cities.** The failure of these policies to have much of an effect on driving might not be important were it not for the fact that the policies impose huge costs on urban residents. Numerous surveys show that the vast majority of Americans say they want to live in a single-family home with a yard. Yet livability policies deliberately make this housing Unaffordable to low- and even middle-income families. Indeed, the housing bubble that led to the recent Economic crisis was almost exclusively in states and urban areas that use smart growth or some other form of growth-management planning. Not coincidentally, a similar property bubble led to Japan's economic crisis in 1990. The administration's livability policies are likely to make America's next housing bubble even worse than the recent one.

Energy 2nc – oil dependence

HSR doesn't reduce oil dependence – electricity is produced from fossil fuels and HSR passengers don't drive or fly

Bosworth 11 – Campaigner for Friends of the Earth, in its energy and climate team (Tony, 11/19/11,"How green is high-speed rail?", http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/18/world/how-green-is-hsr/index.html)

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.

HSR has no environmental benefits – uses just as much oil as cars and planes

O'Toole 9 – A McCluskey Visiting Fellowship for Conservation at Yale University (Randal, 1/4/9, "High-Speed Rail Is No Solution", http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/highspeed-rail-is-no-solution)

The facts do not bear out several aspects of President Barack Obama's desire to push **high-speed rail** projects with federal resources ($8 billion in the economic stimulus package, another $5 billion in his 2010 budget) — **chiefly, that the rail projects are more efficient and more environmentally friendly** than modes of travel now widely in use.¶ **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.¶ **[T]here are likely to be no long-term environmental benefits from investment in high-speed rail.**¶ 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**.¶ 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.

Energy 2nc – A2 oil shocks

No impact – Consumer Adaption and low Natural Gas prices offset the impact

Hamilton 3/9/**12** (James Hamilton is a professor in the Economics Department at the University of California, San Diego, "Why Current High Oil Prices won't Derail the Economy", Consumer Energy Report)

Although the prices of oil and gasoline have risen significantly from their values in October, they are still not back to the levels we saw last spring or in the summer of 2008. **There is a good deal of statistical evidence (for example,**[1]**,**[2]**) that an oil price increase that does no more than reverse an earlier decline has a much more limited effect on the economy** than if the price of oil surges to a new all-time high. One reason for this is **that much of the impact on the economy of an increase in oil prices comes from abrupt changes in the patterns of consumer spending**. **For example,** one thing we often observe **when oil prices spike up is that U.S. consumers suddenly stop buying the less fuel-efficient vehicles that tend to be manufactured in North America.That drop in income for the domestic auto sector is one factor aggravating the overall economic consequences. But if consumers have recently seen even higher prices than they're paying at the moment, their spending plans** and firms' production plans are likely already to **have incorporated that reality.** For example, take a look at February sales of domestic light trucks, which includes SUVs. These were up a bit from last year, but are still 28% below February 2007. **Since the original spike in gas prices** in 2007-2008, **Americans have never gone back to buying the larger vehicles in the numbers we used to.** By contrast, here's a plot of sales of domestically manufactured cars. Sales for February 2012 set an all-time high for this category. Again, historically **when oil prices make an all-time** high, what **we often see is American consumers spending their money on more fuel-efficient imports rather than the domestic vehicles. But this time, Detroit was already in position with the kind of cars people want when the price of gasoline is higher.** Of course, there are other channels by which higher oil prices exert a drag on the U.S. economy besides the domestic auto sector. Another series I pay close attention to is the share of total consumer spending that is eaten up by the cost of energy. **But the remarkable thing here is that nominal consumer spending on energy goods and services actually declined on a seasonally adjusted basis between September and January, even as the price of gasoline was going up considerably.This represents a combination of an unusually mild winter, very low natural gas prices, and consumers finding ways to reduce their energy consumption and thereby insulate their budgets from some of the damage of higher gasoline prices**.

Buffet agrees that there's no impact

Geman 4/27/**12** (Ben is the Hills energy reporter, "Buffett: Oil Prices Won't Derail the Economy", The Hill, http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/212689-buffett-oil-prices-wont-derail-economic-recovery

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett expressed confidence Monday that surging oil and gasoline prices won't halt the country's economic recovery. "They're a minus, but I don't see them stopping things," Buffettsaid on CNBC. Tensions with Iran and **other factors have sent oil prices to their highest levels since last May, and pump prices are rising alongside crude oil costs. "I'd rather have them a lot lower," said Buffett, a supporter of President Obama. But he then added: "I do not think it will derail what has been going on now for almost three years, two and a half years — we have had a steady recovery."**

Energy 2nc – no warming impacts

FIRST, momentum means they can't solve

ANI 10, [3-20-2010, http://news.oneindia.in/2010/03/20/ipcchas-underestimated-climate-change-impacts-sayscientis.html]

According to Charles H. **Greene, Cornell professor** of Earth and atmospheric science, "**Even if all** man-made greenhouse gas **emissions were stopped tomorrow and carbon-dioxide levels stabilized at today's concentration**, by the end of this century, **the global average temperature would increase by about 4.3 degrees Fahrenheit,** or about 2.4 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels, **which is significantly above the level which scientists** and policy makers **agree is a threshold for dangerous climate change**." "Of course, greenhouse gas emissions will not stop tomorrow, so the actual temperature increase will likely be significantly larger, resulting in potentially catastrophic impacts to society unless other steps are taken to reduce the Earth's temperature," he added. "Furthermore, while the oceans have slowed the amount of warming we would otherwise have seen for the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, **the ocean's thermal inertia will also slow the cooling we experience once we finally reduce** our greenhouse gas **emissions**," he said. This means that **the temperature rise we see this century will be largely irreversible for the next thousand years. "Reducing** greenhouse gas **emissions alone is unlikely to mitigate** the risks of dangerous **climate change**," said Green.

Warming is Natural – Solar variability

Singer 2008 [S. Fred Singer, Professor emeritus of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia atmospheric and space physicist, founder and president of the Science and Environmental Policy Project, has served as chief scientist, U.S. Department of Transportation (1987- 89); deputy assistant administrator for policy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1970-71); deputy assistant secretary for water quality and research, U.S. Department of the Interior (1967- 70); founding dean of the School of Environmental and Planetary Sciences, University of Miami (1964-67); first director of the National Weather Satellite Service (1962-64); and director of the Center for Atmospheric and Space Physics, University of Maryland (1953-62), 2008 "Nature, Not Human Activity, Rules the Climate; Summary for Policymakers of the Report of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change " Science and Environmental Policy Project, The Heartland Institute]

If human influences on global climate are minor, what are the major influences? **There are many causes of global climate change, each one prominent depending on the time scale considered. On a time scale of decades to centuries, solar variability may be the most important factor. There are also natural oscillations of internal origin**, especially on a regional scale, that do not appear to be connected to human causes either. ! Internal oscillations play a major role in climate change, yet cannot be forecast. The most prominent natural climate oscillations are the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), Atlantic Multi-Decadal Oscillation (AMO), Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO), and the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO). The IPCC report describes them well and assigns them to internal oscillations of the atmosphere-ocean system. It is significant, however, that they cannot be forecast by conventional climate models although attempts are being made to incorporate them into climate forecasts to improve forecasting skill [Smith 2007;Kerr 2007]. On the other hand, these may be merely attempts to provide 'band-aid' solutions to explain the absence of a warming trend since 1998.Tsonis et al. [2007] analyze large-scale circulation pattern indices, like ENSO, PDO, NAO; they obtain the 1976/77 climate shift as due to a combination of these indices and show a future shift around 2035. ! **The role of solar influences on the climate can no longer be neglected. The IPCC has been disingenuous about solar influences on the climate. Its first report completely ignored solar variability**. The IPCC began to take notice only after the pioneering work of Baliunas and Jastrow [1990] and the startling correlation between twentieth-century temperature and solar-cycle length, published by Friis-Christensen and Lassen [1991]. Even then, **IPCC reports have persisted up until now in concentrating on solar-cycle changes as 'total solar irradiance' (TSI),which are quite small**, of the order of 0.1 percent[Lean et al. 1995; Willson and Mordvinov 2003]**.By disregarding or ignoring the very much larger changes of solar ultraviolet [**Haigh 1996, 2003] or of the solar wind and its magnetic-field effect on cosmic rays **and** thus on cloud coverage [Svensmark2007a], **the IPCC has managed to trivialize the climate effects of solar variability.** The AR4 report reduced the IPCC's already-too-low solar impact by about a factor of three so that it became a mere ~1/13 of the anthropogenic influence. The IPCC does not discuss or even reference basic research papers in this field (by Veizer, Shaviv, and, to some extent, Svensmark).Such an omission is difficult to justify in a report that claims to be the most definitive and inclusive assessment of knowledge on climate change. However, this neglect may no longer be acceptable. The demonstration of solar influence on climate is now overwhelming. One of the prize exhibits is seen in Figure 14 [Neff et al. 2001], which summarizes data obtained from a stalagmite from a cave in Oman. The carbon-14 variations are a clear indication of corresponding changes in galactic cosmic rays (GCR), which are modulated by variations in solar activity. The oxygen-18values are proxies for a climate parameter, like temperature or precipitation, from a shift in the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). The correlation extends well over 3,000 years, with amazingly detailed correspondence. The bottom graph shows the central 400 years expanded and is accurate on almost a yearly basis, making a cause-effect relationship very likely. **The best explanation for these observations, and similar ones elsewhere, is that – as has long been recognized** [Singer 1958] – GCR intensity is modulated by the strength of the solar wind and its magnetic field. More recently, a detailed mechanism whereby cosmic rays can affect cloudiness and therefore climate has been suggested and verified experimentally by Henrik Svensmark [2007a,b].More detailed work is to take place under the CLOUD project proposed by a group of scientists at CERN, the world's largest particle accelerator. Lockwood and Frohlich [2007] have claimed a divergence between TSI and temperature in the past20 years; but this claim is disputed by both solar and climate experts. For example, evidence for climate effects of TSI in more recent times is presented by Scafetta and West [2007], and of solar activity by Usoskin and Kovaltsov [2007]. Shaviv [2002, 2005]has demonstrated the climate effects of flux variations of Galactic Cosmic Rays on the hundred-million-year time scale. See also Shavivand Veizer [2003].There now is little doubt that solar-wind variability is a primary cause of climate change on a decadal time scale. **Once the IPCC comes to terms with this finding, it will have to concede that solar variability provides a better explanation for 20thCentury warming than GH effects. Indeed, solar variability may explain the pre-1940 warming and subsequent cooling period, the MWP and LIA – and other quasi-**

periodic climate oscillation with a period of roughly 1,500 years, going back a million years or more [Singer and Avery 2007].

CO2 from humans has a minor effect on warming

Cunningham 2010 [Walter Cunningham, United States Marine Corps, National Aeronautics and Space Administration - pilot of Apollo 7, graduate degrees from UCLA in physics and the Harvard Graduate School of Business, member of the Advisory Board for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 2010 "Global Warming: Facts versus Faith" The Heartland Institute p.7-9]

The advocates of AGW say the United States must impose a devastating tax scheme to force industry to emit less carbon dioxide, thereby reversing the warming trend. This policy prescription is based on three assumptions: (1) that CO2 is the cause of changes in the Earth's temperature; (2) that a warmer Earth would be bad for the planet's flora and fauna, including humans; and (3) that humans are capable of controlling the temperature of the Earth. In reality, water vapor has more than twice the impact on temperature as atmospheric CO2, aided and abetted by other greenhouse gases, like methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O). **With CO2 representing just 3.6 percent of greenhouse gases, by volume, and human activity responsible for only 3.2 percent of that, we can influence only a tiny portion of the total greenhouse gases. Some studies have found CO2 levels are largely irrelevant to global warming. The true believers in AGW base their case on a broad and weak correlation between CO2 and global temperature in the last half of the twentieth century. They cannot be sure which is cause and which is effec**t. Looking at much longer periods of the Earth's history, it becomes clear that **temperature increases have preceded high CO2 levels by anywhere from 100 to 800 years, suggesting that higher temperatures cause CO2 levels to rise,** rather than vice versa. The only other time in history that temperature and CO2 levels were this low, together, was 300 million years ago**. There have been periods when atmospheric CO2 levels were as much as 16 times higher than they are now—periods characterized not by warming but by glaciations**. (See Figure 4.) You might have to go back half-a-million years to match our current level of atmospheric CO2, but you have to go back only to the Medieval Warm Period, from the tenth to the fourteenth century, to find an intense global warming episode, followed immediately by the drastic cooling of the Little Ice Age. Neither of those events can be attributed to variations in CO2 levels. Since CO2 is a relatively minor constituent of "greenhouse gases," **and human activity contributes only a tiny portion of atmospheric CO2**, why have alarmists made it the whipping boy for global warming? Probably **because they know how fruitless it would be to propose controlling other atmospheric drivers of climate—water, methane, and nitrous oxide—not to mention volcanic eruptions, or ocean temperature, or solar activity, etc. So they wage war on man-made CO2, no matter how ridiculous it makes them appear**. Without the greenhouse effect to keep our world warm, the planet would have an average temperature of -18 degrees Celsius. Because we do have it, the temperature is a comfortable +15 degrees Celsius. Other inconvenient facts ignored by the activists: Carbon dioxide is a non-polluting gas that is essential for plant photosynthesis. Higher concentrations of CO2 in the atmosphere produce bigger crop harvests and larger and healthier forests—results environmentalists used to like.

It's too late – past emissions guarantee locked weather cycles for the next 1000 years

Gitlin 2009 [Jonathan M. Gitlin, January 27, 2009, "Study: too late to turn back the clock on climate change," http://arstechnica.com/science/news/2009/01/study-too-late-to-turn-back-the-clock-on-climate-change.ars]

This week's PNAS brings with it some bad news on the climate front**: even if policy makers and the general public get on board with drastic CO2 emission cuts, it's already too late to prevent serious changes to the planet's climate**, and those changed will be remarkably persistent. Those are the findings of a group of researchers from the US, Switzerland, and France. In their paper, they look at the effect of increasing CO2 over millennial time frames, and it's worrisome stuff. Currently**, CO2 levels in the atmosphere are around 385 ppm, a 35 percent increase over pre-industrial levels. The most optimistic scenarios arrive at a figure of 450 ppm as the best we might be able to achieve in the coming decades, but even at that level, changes in precipitation patterns, temperature increases, and a rise in sea level appear to be locked in for at least the next thousand years.** The dynamics of the oceans are to blame. According to Susan Soloman, Senior Scientist at NOAA and lead author, "In the long run, both carbon dioxide loss and heat transfer depend on the same physics of deep-ocean mixing. The two work against each other to keep temperatures almost constant for more than a thousand years, and that makes carbon dioxide unique among the major climate gases." One of the most profound effects looks to **be a severe decrease in rainfall that will affect the southeastern US, the Mediterranean, southern Asia, and swathes of subtropical Africa and South America. Sea levels are going to rise too.** Without even accounting for melting ice sheets, the sheer thermal expansion of the Earth's oceans will be between 0.4-1m, and as with the temperature rise and the changes to rainfall, these effects look set to persist for at least until the year 3000.

Solvency

Solvency 1nc

HSR empirically doesn't get enough ridership

Utt 10 (Ronald, Research Fellow in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at the Heritage Foundation, "America's Coming High-Speed Rail Financial Disaster," March 19, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/03/america-s-coming-high-speed-rail-financial-disaster)

To put the European commitment to passenger rail in perspective, rail ridership (high speed, conventional intercity, and metropolitan commuter rail) in these six countries **accounted for just 7.9 percent of all surface transportation modes** on a per passenger, per billion kilometer basis. This suggests that these **countries received a poor return on their money given that more than 90 percent of passengers in these countries chose other travel modes**-- mostly auto--**despite the subsidies**. In Europe as a whole (EU-27), rail accounted for only 6.1 percent of passenger travel in 2007, including travel by air and sea. Buses accounted for 8.3 percent of the market, and air travel accounted for 8.8 percent. **Despite Europe's huge investment in passenger rail, its market share declined** from 6.6 percent in 1995 to 6.1 percent in 2007. **Over that same period, commercial air increased its share** from 6.3 percent to 8.8 percent. **By providing faster service and competitive prices, it took passengers away from rail, buses, and autos.** This last point is of some importance because one goal of the HSR scheme is to shift travel from largely unsubsidized commercial aviation to heavily subsidized trains. Yet **the same scheme in Europe seems to have failed over the past dozen years, despite massive government subsidies**. Nonetheless, as problematic as the general European experience with passenger rail has been, some individual countries have experienced even worse results.

Failure to terminate existing policies undermines HSR

MK: Gilbert,; **Perl, 2010** (Richard Anthony. Transport Revolutions : Moving People and Freight Without Oil. New York, NY, USA: New Society Publishers,. p 239. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/Doc?id=10397417&ppg=239 Copyright © 2010. New Society Publishers. All rights reserved.)

Existing aviation and road development policies and programs that are not compatible with a shift away from oil-powered transport will have to be terminated, as will policies and programs that support associated land uses. The skill and effort needed to remove existing policies and dismantle established programs is far from trivial. **Lack of a focus on policy termination has undermined many efforts by leaders — across the spectrum of political orientation — to change the direction of US policy**. These efforts include, for example, the Carter administration's agenda of government leadership in energy conservation of the late 1970s and the Reagan administration's goal of replacing Social Security pensions with private alternatives in the 1980s. **Failures to terminate existing policies have undermined the key priorities of more than these two presidents**. One analyst noted that the political dynamics of terminating established public policies differ fundamentally from those involved in creating new policies because "…distinctive coalitions generally form on both sides… [and] termination contests are usually more bitter and harder to win than most policy adoption contests."25

Eminent domain and environmental lawsuits gut solvency – fiat doesn't solve

Longman 11(Phillip, senior fellow at Washington Monthly and New America foundation, "The Case for Not-Quite-So-High-Speed Rail," Aug, http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/julyaugust_2011/features/the_case_for_notquite_sohighsp030492.php?page=2)

But as great as it would be to have passenger service as fast and elegant as the TGV in the United States, **there are many reasons not to put our first dollars into such an ambitious project**. First off, building a truly high-speed rail system in today's America would be so expensive, disruptive, contentious, and politically risky that it just might not be possible. **It would require,** for example, **securing brand-new rights-of-way, because trains traveling at more than around 125 mph can't share tracks with slower freight or passenger trains. This in turn would require using eminent domain to secure millions of acres of real estate**, and these days, in the U.S., **that would involve endless litigation, environmental review, and the innumerable other processes that always stand to derail any large-scale infrastructure project. Plans** to build a high-speed rail **in California** between San Diego and the Bay Area **are** now **foundering for** precisely **this reason**. Big showcase **high-speed projects in Texas and Florida flopped** in the 1990s **for the same reason**, plus another: the shifting currents of polarized American politics.

Solvency 2nc – existing transportation

Continued spending on airports and roads empirically undermines transit funding

MK: Gilbert,; **Perl, 2010** (Richard Anthony. Transport Revolutions : Moving People and Freight Without Oil. New York, NY, USA: New Society Publishers,. p 239. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/Doc?id=10397417&ppg=239 Copyright © 2010. New Society Publishers. All rights reserved.)

Many of the previous efforts in the US to cultivate energy-efficient alternatives — including local public transport across the and intercity rail passenger improvements **— have been undermined by simultaneous additions to — to change road and airport capacity, usually paid for with earmarked trust funds from fuel and other taxes. Such an approach to transport development, which some portray as "balanced" spending, is analogous to applying a car's accelerator and brake at the same time. The result undermines the performance of both systems and eventually destroys the engine**. The onset of the next transport revolutions should be most noticeable for what stops happening, namely the expansion of highways and airports. A scan of the US federal budget suggests the magnitude of resources that could then become available following such redeployment.

Solvency 2nc – ridership

HSR would only divert a small number of passengers at best – nonpartisan study proves

NCPA 10 (the National Center for Policy Analysis is a conservative think tank. "Calif. Rail Project Is High-Speed Pork" http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=20001 Nov 4 2010)

High-speed trains connecting major cities are a perfect example of wasteful spending masquerading as a respectable social cause. In reality, they would further burden already overburdened governments and drain dollars from worthier programs, says Robert Samuelson. Let's suppose that the Obama administration gets its wish to build high-speed rail systems in 13 urban corridors. The administration has already committed $10.5 billion, and that's just a token down payment. California wants about $19 billion for an 800-mile track from Anaheim to San Francisco. Constructing all 13 corridors could easily approach $200 billion. Most (or all) of that would have to come from government at some level. What would we get for this huge investment? Not much. Here's what we wouldn't get: any meaningful reduction in traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, air travel, oil consumption or import**s**, says Samuelson. **High-speed intercity trains (not commuter lines) travel at up to 250 miles per hour and are most competitive with planes and cars over distances of fewer than 500 miles. In a report on high-speed rail, the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service examined the 12 corridors of 500 miles or fewer with the most daily air traffic in 2007. Los Angeles to San Francisco led the list with 13,838 passengers; altogether, daily air passengers in these 12 corridors totaled 52,934. If all of them switched to trains, the total number of daily airline passengers (about 2 million) would drop only 2.5 percent, and any fuel savings would be less than that. High-speed rail would subsidize a tiny group of travelers and do little else**. With governments everywhere pressed for funds, how can anyone justify a program whose main effect will simply be to make matters worse?

AFF ridership projections overstated - empirically disproven

Cox and Vranich '8 (Wendell Cox Principal of Demographia (St. Louis. Mo.), a public policy firm; and Joseph Vranich Consultnt @ National Journal. The California High Speed Rail Proposal: A Due Diligence Report http://reason.org/files/1b544eba6f1d5f9e8012a8c36676ea7e.pdf)

Because HSR ridership is likely to be only a fraction of CHSRA projections, the long-term economic impact of the system (beyond the construction jobs) **is expected to be slight**, at best. This is consistent with the world infrastructure research, which finds that**: It is common for proponents of major infrastructure projects to claim that such projects will result in substantial regional and/or national development effects. Empirical evidence shows that these claims are not well founded.**[522]

States CP

States CP – Solvency 1nc

States solve best. State funding effects responsible planning and coordination of HSR

Chicago Tribune '1 ("Let states drive high-speed train," Dec 24, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-12-24/news/0112240192_1_high-speed-rail-investment-high-speed-train-high-speed-rail)

Amtrak--the money-losing operation that poses as a national passenger railroad in the U.S.--is taking the lead in the development of a high-speed train network in the Midwest, comparable to the European trains that zoom by at more than 150 m.p.h. High-speed rail service in the Midwest is an interesting prospect--the market, as well as environmental, energy conservation and other concerns, may justify it. But **putting Amtrak in charge and expecting the feds to pay for most of it certainly is a recipe for waste and bad planning.** For the Midwest, at least, a frequent, comfortable and reliable **high-speed rail system** would be a new concept. It **ought to be designed** and operated as such, **according to market demand, with a rigorous bottom-line approach. In other words, everything Amtrak is not.** According to plans being circulated in Congress and promoted by several local groups, Chicago would be the hub of a series of high-speed rail lines zipping out to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Detroit, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Cleveland and other major urban areas, with stops at some smaller cities like Springfield, Ill., and Madison, Wis. New trains would run on upgraded freight tracks at estimated speeds of 110 m.p.h. The initial phase would be funded by approximately $4 billion, the Midwest's share of the $12 billion High Speed Rail Investment initiative, under consideration by Congress. Individual states have pledged smaller amounts to the effort, including Illinois' $50 million. A reverse logic animates this project: Instead of determining there is urgent demand--and then seeking funding--Midwestern supporters seem to be saying, "The pot of money is there, so we might as well get our share." That's not the way to build a new railroad, but to extend **Amtrak** domain which, **torn by the incompatible demands of politics,** public service and profitability, **has evolved into anything but an efficient train system. States ought to take the lead in the high-speed rail effort, and contribute a substantial amount of the money.** Perhaps the federal government could pay for the start-up infrastructure improvements, as it did to build the original interstate highway system in the 1950s. Then **an independent multi-state agency could purchase the trains and turn over operations to a private concern. Such high stakes and strong participation by the states would lead to a far tougher analysis of what service is needed than the pinata-style planning at play here**. Built modestly and incrementally, high-speed rail could work and even make money, at which time full privatization would be the next step. A Chicago-to-St. Louis line, running on relatively underutilized freight tracks through Normal and Springfield, could be a key test. **Run efficiently, it could compete favorably** with airlines on speed of downtown-to-downtown service, and certainly on roominess and comfort. Regional high-speed service has caught on in California and in the Northwest, and it may well do so here. Although Amtrak's math is complicated, the agency projects that, when fully operational, its high-speed Acela line on the Northeast will make about $180 million in annual profit Are there enough commuters and are they willing to give up their cars or airline seats in favor of high-speed trains? **If it's their own money on the line, state officials, planners--and taxpayers--would make sure the project makes sense before any money is invested**. High-speed train service in the Midwest is a prospect worth investigating, on the right terms.

States CP – A2 state spending

No link - States can find creative funding schemes

Puentes '9 (et al, Robert Puentes – Senior Fellow @ Brooking's Metropolitan Policy Program – Innovative State Transportation: Funding and Financing Policy Options for States – – January 05, 2009 – http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0901TRANSPORTATIONFUNDING.PDF)

Each state is facing the challenges of rising demand and **inadequate revenue to some degree**. However, they each have unique needs and strategic goals and objectives. In states with less population and traffic density, certain user-fee solutions may not be as feasible as they would be in more densely populated states and regions**. Governors are pursuing varied options** to address these challenges, **and** states are **pioneering new means of** planning for and **funding** and financing **transportation. Some states have worked to increase** or index their **motor fuel taxes** to overcome purchasing power declines and to increase revenue for transportation projects. **Some states also are increasing vehicle registration fees and look**ing **to general fund revenues to fund transportation.** More broadly, **states are pursuing a number of innovative funding** and financing **options** that also can help to reduce demand. **Options** that are discussed in this report **include: • Debt financing strategies**, including state infrastructure banks; • **Tolling**, vehicle miles traveled fees, **congestion pricing, and** other **user fees;** • Public-private partnerships that leverage private capital and expertise; and • **Freight-specific strategies.**

States CP – A2 fed key

States can attract private partners – gaining huge short-term revenue boosts

Puentes '9 (et al, Robert Puentes – Senior Fellow @ Brooking's Metropolitan Policy Program – Innovative State Transportation: Funding and Financing Policy Options for States – – January 05, 2009 – http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0901TRANSPORTATIONFUNDING.PDF)

Next, **states can seek to increase investment in the system in the near-term.** States and the federal government have long-relied on the motor fuel tax, and are likely to continue to do so. However, states have several options to supplement motor fuel tax revenue. **Some states have looked to public-private partnerships to attract private sector capital** and project expertise **in order to move forward on priority projects.** One type of **public-private partnership**, an asset lease, **has the potential to provide states with significant upfront capital which can be used to fund a number of transportation priorities**. However, these partnerships often require either new user fees or private collection of existing user fees (such as tolls), that provide a return on investment to the private partner. A public-private partnership strategy alone will not solve all of a state's transportation challenges, but **carefully managed partnerships can complement existing revenue,** accelerate project delivery**, and attract private capital and expertise.**