

Today I am delivering a speech to the US High Speed Rail Association's DC Summit. In light of today's exciting high speed rail announcement from President Obama, I wanted to share the text of my speech with you.

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

US High Speed Rail Association

February 8, 2011

I am so pleased to be speaking to you, particularly in light of today's announcement that President Obama is prepared to commit \$53 billion over six years to continue construction of a national high-speed and intercity passenger rail network.

We are at a vital moment in American history, and the President is answering the call for bold investments that will shape the future of our nation and our destiny as a competitive world power.

Like President Obama, I share the goal of giving 80 percent of Americans access to high speed rail within 25 years. Today's announcement is a tremendous step in the right direction, and I intend to do all that I can to make sure this money is included in our final budget for this year, and becomes a secure source of funding over the next six years.

While I am aware of the resistance among some to spend money in our current economic environment, the truth is that only bold investments in our nation's infrastructure will help us build a foundation for a stronger future and compete in the global economy.

A high speed rail network is also a matter of national security. The ability to ensure the safety of our citizens is tied directly to our ability to rebuild and retool our transportation networks and our economy that relies on these networks for success.

A national high speed rail system would provide a national security defense here at home. It would serve as a modern network to move both civilian and military personnel at a moment's notice, while freeing our freight rail lines to move goods and supplies.

In addition, recent events in the Middle East have again reminded us of how closely tied we are to the oil-rich Middle East to meet our energy needs. This dependency is bad for America's national security interests, and will only get worse as the world's oil supply reaches its peak and begins to decline. A national high speed rail system ends our oil dependency quickly and permanently, and prevents our country from being dragged into future struggles to secure oil to meet our energy needs.

In addition to our dependence on foreign oil, we face an increasingly urgent climate crisis, with more severe and dangerous storms grinding commerce to a halt, stranding millions, and threatening human life. These storms are just the latest reminder that the benefits of a greener rail system can no longer wait.

If we are to realize the economic, environmental and security benefits of high speed rail, we must think big. Anything other than a national high speed rail network just won't do.

We have the chance to design nothing less than the transportation and economic foundation of the next 50 years. But if we instead choose for "limited" and "targeted" investments in high speed rail, we will be left with nothing but novelty projects and only "limited" and "targeted" benefits for our country. Quite simply, a high speed train in Florida and a high speed train on the Northeast Seaboard does not a foundation make.

This investment in high speed rail will more than pay for itself with the jobs created for Americans in need of work, and opportunities it creates for future growth. According to The United States Conference of Mayors, cities and regions around the country will see job growth

from the realization of a high speed rail network, including at least 21,000 estimated new jobs and \$1.1 billion in new wages in my home state of New York. As rail lines open and communities are brought closer together, the potential long-term impact of rail service will only grow.

When our nation's interstate highway system was built, we invested in a transportation network that passed through every state in the union, benefitting commerce and private citizens alike. The interstate highway system project was neither "targeted" nor "limited"; it was a bold step towards an American future, and the investment paid-off. The interstate highway system helped to secure America's position as the dominant economic world power throughout the remainder of the 20th Century.

Sixty-five years after the passage of legislation to build our interstate highway system, we face another opportunity to boldly win the future. A national high speed rail network is vital to our nation's success in the global economy, now and in the years to come. I urge my colleagues in Congress, the audience here today and Americans across the country, to support the President's \$53 billion dollar investment, and realize a national high speed rail network in the United States.