

Andy Kunz Testimony

House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee Hearing

I'd like to thank Chairman DeFazio, Chairman Payne, and Ranking Member Crawford and the other Members of the Subcommittee for holding this important hearing today.

We have before us a unique opportunity to remake our nation by investing in high speed rail - an incredible mode of transport proven to deliver multiple benefits across a number of sectors. The rest of the world has embraced this technology and for decades has benefitted greatly from it. America is one of the last remaining industrialized nations that doesn't have high speed rail.

The benefits are many and including the following:

MOBILITY & JOBS BENEFITS

High speed rail offers a new very high-capacity transport mode that can efficiently carry 20,000 people per hour without congestion, delays, or hassles. High speed rail not only adds major new capacity to the transportation mix, but also takes the strain off both highways and runways making both of those modes function better as a secondary benefit. High speed rail shortens commutes and makes it easy to apply for jobs in a much larger region, and for employers to draw from a larger geographic area.

Imagine the benefits to residents of Houston who could get to jobs in Dallas in an hour and 15 minutes by high speed rail. This would be a game changer. Residents of Detroit could get to jobs and business opportunities in Chicago in an hour and a half. Atlanta residents could have easy access to Charlotte with 1 hour and 10 minute train rides. Residents of Eugene, Oregon could work in Portland's tech sector or its booming outdoor gear industry with 35 minute trains between those cities.

High speed rail will also directly create millions of good paying permanent jobs across multiple sectors and at every skill level building, operating, and maintaining the new high speed rail network. This will also spur a whole new American manufacturing industry centered on rail development - creating millions of permanent jobs including fabrication, steel making, concrete tie production, and the many components that make up a modern train.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EQUITY, & AFFORDABLE LIVING

High speed rail stimulates economic development in multiple ways and spreads it to cities and regions left behind – connecting them with major employment centers and all the opportunities that brings. HSR also lowers the cost of both transportation and housing for millions of people while providing vast access to miles of entire affordable communities. High speed rail can help repair damage done to minority communities from the build out of our interstate highway system which separated communities. High speed rail ties communities together providing affordable, clean transportation.

SAFETY BENEFITS

High speed rail is the safest form of transportation possible. The longest operating HSR network in Japan

has been carrying billions of people for 50 years without a single fatality. In comparison, as many as 40,000 Americans are killed every year in auto accidents on our highways.

CLIMATE SOLUTION

HSR can rapidly decarbonize a large portion of our transportation sector - the #1 sectoral cause of climate change. High speed rail is electric so can be powered by clean domestic sources of energy, including renewables.

GLOBAL LEVELS OF HSR INVESTMENT

High speed rail is a mature, proven technology currently in operation in more than 20 countries including many nations that are far smaller than the U.S., with a fraction of our GDP.

The reason so many nations have advanced high speed rail networks is because their governments invested heavily in these new systems as sustained investments over several decades.

- The United Kingdom is currently doubling their high speed rail network, investing another \$120 Billion dollars on High Speed 2 expanding to the northern cities.
- France has invested well over \$160 Billion into the construction of their network and is still adding new lines to more cities.
- Italy built a new network connecting their nation, investing around \$75 Billion so far.
- Spain built the largest high speed rail network in Europe spanning nearly 2,000 miles - investing more than \$175 Billion.
- (Keep in mind each of these nations are similar in size to a single U.S. state like Texas, California, or Florida.)
- The largest global investment to date in high speed rail is in China. Over the last 14 years, the Chinese government invested more than \$1 Trillion dollars building a brand-new, 22,000 mile, world-class HSR network that is now fully operational, transporting billions of people all over their nation. This is more new high speed rail miles than the rest of the world combined. On top of that, China has an additional 21,000 miles currently under construction to complete their full national high speed rail network of 43,000 miles by 2030 — only 9 years from now.

Of special note, China's economy is on track to be bigger than ours by 2028. The only way we'll be able to compete is by having the same highly efficient national transportation system underlying our economy. As we all know, transportation dictates the entire functioning and cost of running a nation. Countries that have a fast, delay-free transport system will outcompete others that don't.

AMERICA CAN HAVE THIS TOO

We agree with Secretary Buttigieg's recent statement: "I just don't know why people in other countries

ought to have better train service or more investment in high speed rail than Americans do". There really is no good reason. High speed rail has been built in every type geography, climate, and government structure. We can do this! Building our national high speed rail network should be as important and historic as Eisenhower building the interstate highway system back in the 1950s which created the framework for our continued prosperity we all enjoy today. It's our responsibility now to do the same level of generational investments for future generations coming along behind us.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING THIS A SUCCESS IN AMERICA (based on case studies around the world)

1) NATIONAL VISION & PLAN OF ACTION

Establish a new **High Speed Rail Development Agency** within the USDOT tasked with the mission to work with states to plan out national network, lead projects, standardize the development and construction processes, bring down costs and project development timelines, and offer one-stop permitting.

2) IMMEDIATE, LARGE TARGETED INVESTMENTS

Fast-track all of the top 5 projects by designating them projects of national importance, accelerating their development and construction to completion, so the public can get relief with a fast new mode of transport.

3) ESTABLISHMENT OF RAIL TRUST FUND

We need a capital fund to build the new high speed rail network, project by project to full build out by 2035. This includes the establishment of Project Trust Funds for each of the leading HSR projects to draw from through project development and construction phases — saving time and development costs.

4) ENACTING GLOBAL STANDARDS, PRINCIPLES, SYSTEM GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

We should use principles of system design and operational standards garnered from 50 years of high speed rail development wisdom and experience from more than 20 nations.

CONCLUSION

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has the power to transform America with 21st century transportation - setting into motion a new direction unleashing layers of benefits, solutions, and improvements to all our lives, and our future. We urge you to invest heavily in high speed rail starting today and help write America's next chapter of greatness.

Thank you for your time and for inviting me to testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.