

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 1, 2021

Majority Leader Charles Schumer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Chair Maria Cantwell  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Peter A. DeFazio  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Roger Wicker  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Sam Graves  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, Chair Cantwell, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Wicker, and Ranking Member Graves:

With the new administration, we have a generational opportunity to invest in our nation's infrastructure, and we are grateful for your leadership in ensuring we invest in *next* generation infrastructure, not just the infrastructure of the past. As negotiations continue to develop around a comprehensive infrastructure package, we write to express our support for the inclusion of dedicated funding to develop international-standard high-speed rail with high-performance connections that feed into a larger network. A federal commitment to these modern and proven transportation systems will dramatically improve our environment, reduce inequity, and help grow cities and sustain vibrant downtowns across the nation.

Reducing emissions from the transportation sector is critical to meeting our nation's climate goals and cutting our carbon footprint. According to an Environmental Protection Agency report, the transportation sector accounted for 28 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 to 2018, making it the largest contributing sector.<sup>1</sup>

A robust network of high-speed rail corridors with high-performance connections is the best option to dramatically reduce carbon emissions while improving intercity travel. It will be decades before aviation is carbon-free, and electric cars – although vital – will not improve

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<sup>1</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency, "Fast Facts: U.S. Transportation Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2018," accessed March 18, 2021, <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100ZK4P.pdf>.

highway speeds. By contrast, electrified high-speed rail will capture a significant portion of demand for travel between 100 and 750 miles with greater efficiency than flying or driving. Notably, the average and median distances of American long-distance travel are 744 and 391 miles, respectively.<sup>2</sup> High-speed rail also dramatically reduces land use: a single high-speed rail line matches the capacity of six highway lanes, 91 airport gates, and two new runways.

As we rebuild coming out of the pandemic, investing in a high-speed rail network with high-performance rail connections will create direct, good-paying union jobs with labor protections, while enabling long-term economic growth across whole megaregions and providing vital access to opportunity for smaller communities. Good-paying jobs provide benefits through construction and engineering, steel production, and manufacturing in the rail sector, but also result in economic development around stations both in major cities and in intermediate communities. High-speed rail also reduces regional disparities—as it did in China by an average of 25%<sup>3</sup>—through increased access to jobs and housing. A high-speed rail line from Chicago to Atlanta is equivalent to Beijing to Shanghai, and would connect the people and economies of intermediate cities like Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville, and Chattanooga with two top-ten Gross Metropolitan Product metropolises.

A recent study by Microsoft, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia of the Cascadia Corridor estimated \$355 billion in economic benefits from building a 250 mph high-speed rail line, a 10:1 return on investment. Consider an alternative: adding a lane of highway in each direction would cost more than twice as much, the study estimates, and accrue almost no additional economic benefits because travel times would not improve. Likewise, making only modest investments to existing rail service would provide travelers with an attractive alternative to driving, but would not improve overall travel times enough to generate anywhere near this scale of economic benefits. Even countries like Morocco, with roughly half a percent of the U.S. GDP, are building true high-speed rail because the return on investment is so positive.

Properly designed, high-speed trunk lines form the backbone of a broader integrated network. Airport connections to high-speed rail in Europe and Asia are routine, as are higher-speed feeders, and local connections speed travelers at low environmental cost to their destinations. Germany and France, for instance, have prioritized high-speed rail for domestic travel, with connections to airports for international travel. In San Jose, California, high-speed rail will connect to a hub with six rail systems and several bus lines at Diridon Station. Seamless connections such as this boost the ridership and economic efficiency of all the component elements. In addition, a series of high-performance rail lines will ensure that smaller and more historically disadvantaged communities have their own connections into a larger national network of travel and opportunity.

As Congress advances legislation to build back better as a nation, we urge you to create a carve-out for dedicated high-speed rail corridor planning and development grants, which will enable investments in high-speed and high-performance rail. In the event that Congress advances

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<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Transportation Statistics, “National Household Travel Survey Long Distance Travel,” accessed May 21, 2021, <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/archive/conferences/nhts/Sharp.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Zhenhua Chen, Kingsley Haynes, “Impact of High-Speed Rail on Regional Economic Disparity in China | Elsevier Enhanced Reader,” accessed February 2, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2017.08.003>

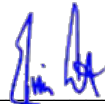
the American Jobs Plan through budget reconciliation, we request that you raise the topline funding levels for transportation in the budget resolution above the American Jobs Plan number to include dedicated high-speed rail corridor planning and development funding with high-performance rail connections. This will demonstrate that the federal government is ready to commit as a partner in developing high-speed rail corridors across the United States, connecting communities, enhancing economic development, and protecting our environment.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of these requests. We stand ready to work with you to deliver an infrastructure package for the American people.

Sincerely,



SETH MOULTON  
*Member of Congress*



JIM COSTA  
*Member of Congress*



ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ  
*Member of Congress*



EDWARD J. MARKEY  
*United States Senator*



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND  
*United States Senator*

ALEX PADILLA  
*United States Senator*

ELIZABETH WARREN  
*United States Senator*

DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
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DINA TITUS  
*Member of Congress*

BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN  
*Member of Congress*

PETER WELCH  
*Member of Congress*

CC: Chairman Sanders, United States Senate Committee on the Budget  
Chairman Yarmuth, United States House Committee on the Budget  
Ranking Member Graham, United States Senate Committee on the Budget  
Ranking Member Smith, United States House Committee on the Budget