



PREVIOUS ARTICLE

June 30, 2021

MOULTON, OCASIO-CORTEZ, COSTA, MARKEY AND GILLIBRAND BUILD COALITION OF 80 LAWMAKERS IN SUPPORT OF HIGH- SPEED RAIL

WASHINGTON —Today, **Representatives Seth Moulton, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Jim Costa and Senators Ed Markey and Kirsten Gillibrand** announced 71 Representatives and 4 Senators have joined their efforts to increase funding for high-speed and high-performance rail. The leaders have been circulating a bicameral letter to the committee chairs and leadership of both chambers for the last two weeks.

The broad, 80-member coalition wants Congress to include high-speed rail among the transformational investments outlined in the American Jobs Plan, and they want Congress to invest as much in high-speed rail as it does in road and air travel.

In the letter, the lawmakers said, "*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.*"

The following Senators signed the letter: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA), Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA), Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR).



The following Representatives signed the letter: Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA), Rep.

Jake Auchincloss (D-MA), Rep. Donald S. Beyer Jr. (D-VA), Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY), Rep. Brendan F. Boyle (D-PA), Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA), Rep. Cori Bush (D-MO), Rep. André Carson (D-IN), Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX), Rep. David N. Cicilline (D-RI), Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, II (D-MO), Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT), Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL), Rep. Sharice L. Davids (D-KS), Rep. Madeleine Dean (D-PA), Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-CT), Rep. Suzan K. DelBene (D-WA), Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Rep. Mike Doyle (D-PA), Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA), Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL), Rep. Lois Frankel (D-FL), Rep. Jesús G. "Chuy" García (D-IL), Rep. Al Green (D-TX), Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT), Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV), Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA), Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Rep. Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr. (D-GA), Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Rep. Mondaire Jones (D-NY), Rep. William R. Keating (D-MA), Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA), Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Rep. James R. Langevin (D-RI), Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV), Rep. Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA), Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-NJ), Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY), Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA), Rep. Jerry McNerney (D-CA), Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY), Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI), Rep. Joseph D. Morelle (D-NY), Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO), Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN), Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-CO), Rep. Scott H. Peters (D-CA), Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI), Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Rep. Kathleen M. Rice (D-NY), Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ), Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), Rep. Thomas R. Suozzi (D-NY), Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA), Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA), Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV), Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), and Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA).

In addition to the lawmakers, the letter has been endorsed by the following

organizations and individuals: The US High Speed Rail Association (USHSR); the US High Speed Rail Coalition; High Speed Rail Alliance; Former Amtrak Vice President of High-Speed Rail and Immediate Past Chair of the APTA High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Committee Al Engel; Brightline Trains; SYSTRA USA; Building America's Future; Emeritus Chair of California High Speed Rail Authority and Past Chair of the American Public Transportation Association Rod Diridon; the American Public Transportation Association; The American Train Dispatchers Association; HJI Group Corp; the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, SEIU; Cascadia Rail; Transportation for Massachusetts; the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; the Sunrise Movement; National Grid; the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way, Teamsters; the Eugene, Ore. Area Chamber of Commerce; Turner Engineering Corporation; the Rail Passengers Association; the Green New Deal Network; The Railway Supply Institute; the Railway Supply Institute; Former Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx; Progressive Democrats of America; Manufacturing Renaissance; California High-Speed Rail; Dikita Enterprise, INC; and former CEO of the LA Metro and current CEO of Colorado Regional Transportation District Phillip Washington.

The full text of the letter is as follows:



Majority Leader Charles Schumer

United States Senate
Representatives

Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi

United States House of

Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell

United States Senate
Representatives

Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy

United States House of

Washington, DC 20515

Chair Maria Cantwell

Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation

United States Senate
Representatives

Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Peter A. DeFazio

Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure

United States House of

Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Roger Wicker

Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation

United States Senate
Representatives

Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Sam Graves

Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure

United States House of

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



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.^[1]

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 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.^[2] 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%^[3]—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

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 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,

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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

^[1] United States Environmental Protection Agency, "Fast Facts: U.S. Transportation Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2018, accessed March 18, 2021

^[2] Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "National Household Travel Survey Long Distance Travel," accessed May 21, 2021

[3] Zhenhua Chen, Kingsley Haynes, "Impact of High Speed Rail on Regional Economic



Links to all citations available upon request.

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