COALITION LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN HIGH-SPEED RAIL ACT OF 2026

A Message of Thanks to Cosponsors

Dear Representative [Name],

On behalf of the undersigned organizations — representing business, labor, local government, environmental advocates, and taxpayer groups from across the United States — we write to express our gratitude for your leadership as a cosponsor of the American High-Speed Rail Act of 2026.

The American High-Speed Rail Act of 2026, introduced by Congressman Seth Moulton (MA-06) and co-led by Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (WA-01) with more than 50 cosponsors, would authorize up to $41 billion annually over five years — $205 billion total — to plan, build, and expand a national high-speed passenger rail network at 186 mph or greater, with public-private partnership frameworks to leverage additional private investment.

The cost of America's transportation failures is enormous and growing. Highway congestion cost Americans $74 billion in lost time in 2024 alone — 43 hours per driver, a full work week — with trucking absorbing a record $108.8 billion in congestion costs in 2022, passed directly to consumers as higher prices. Flight disruptions strip another $34 billion from the economy each year. For tens of millions of Americans in small and mid-sized cities, airlines have simply abandoned regional routes, leaving no good alternative. And these costs are only growing — along with the price tag of the status quo: every new highway lane and airport runway costs billions to build and billions more to maintain, yet demand for both grows faster than we can build. High-speed rail offers a way off that treadmill.

High-speed rail addresses these failures while opening possibilities no other mode offers. It pulls millions of cars off congested highways, freeing roads for freight and essential travel, and reduces the need for costly new highway capacity. It relieves pressure on overwhelmed airports — and in many cases can connect directly to airport terminals, functioning as a fast connecting flight for travelers arriving from smaller cities, reducing short-haul flights that clog gates and delay longer routes. This operating model is used to great success abroad; for example, Air France offers combined booking options that allow passengers to connect smoothly between Air France flights and high-speed TGV trains.. It runs on electricity — not jet fuel — producing a fraction of the carbon of flying or driving, and getting cleaner as the grid does. A well-designed rail system keeps running in snow and ice that grounds flights for days, giving travelers and businesses a resilient alternative when airports shut down. It makes weekend tourism practical, opens smaller cities along corridors to visitor spending, and gives senior citizens who cannot or choose not to drive their independence back. And high-speed rail investments consistently upgrade tracks and stations shared by commuter railroads, improving daily service for millions of local riders who never board a long-distance train.

High-speed rail is also a national security investment. When September 11 grounded every commercial aircraft, trains kept moving — proof that a decentralized, redundant transportation network is a more resilient one. Electrified rail replaces oil — subject to foreign governments and global markets — with domestically generated electricity. The Center for Clean Air Policy estimates a national high-speed rail network could eliminate 500,000 annual flights and reduce car trips by 29 million, saving billions of gallons of fuel annually. The International Union of Railways finds high-speed rail more than four times as energy-efficient as driving and nearly nine times more efficient than flying. Defense hawks have argued for decades that reducing oil dependence is a national security imperative. Electrified high-speed rail is one of the most powerful tools we have to do it.

This is a question of whether America intends to compete and win. China has built more than 28,000 miles of high-speed rail as a deliberate national industrial strategy, giving its manufacturers and workers a transportation cost advantage American businesses cannot match. Building high-speed rail means buying American steel, American trains, and American technology — putting Americans to work building infrastructure that serves this country for generations. We spend over a trillion dollars a year on national defense. High-speed rail advances our security, our economy, and our competitive position against China at a fraction of that cost, with returns compounding for generations.

Momentum is building at the state and private level. Projects are already underway or in serious planning across the country — they need federal investment to connect into a true national network:

• Northeast Corridor (Boston–New York–Washington, D.C.): New Acela fleet at 160 mph entered service 2025; track improvements will unlock higher speeds.
• California High-Speed Rail (San Francisco–Los Angeles–San Diego): Under active construction at up to 220 mph; track installation begins 2026.
• Brightline West (Las Vegas–Los Angeles area): Under construction at up to 200 mph; private investment leading, opening targeted 2029.
• Brightline Florida (Miami–Orlando, expanding to Tampa): Higher-speed service operating; Tampa extension in planning.
• Texas Central (Dallas–Houston): A 240-mile, 200-mph corridor connecting the fastest-growing megaregion in the country.
• Midwest Regional Rail (Chicago hub to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Detroit, St. Louis, Indianapolis): FRA Midwest framework in place; Illinois High-Speed Rail Commission active.
• Southeast Corridor: Planning underway connecting Atlanta, Charlotte, Richmond, and beyond.

We urge you to continue championing this legislation, push for its inclusion in any surface transportation reauthorization, and call on the Administration to fund it robustly. We stand with you.

Respectfully,

High Speed Rail Alliance

MetropolitanPlanningCouncil

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STREETS FOR ALL

09/10/2026