

## THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

### RESOLUTION PROMOTING HIGH-SPEED RAIL

#### Resolution Summary

In recent decades, while high-speed rail made tremendous strides in parts of Asia and Europe, rail travel in the United States languished. However, this scenario is in the process of undergoing a radical transformation as a result of efforts initiated by the Obama Administration to include \$13 billion (\$8 billion in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA) along with an additional \$5 billion spread over the next five years) as seed money to fund up to 11 high-speed rail corridors connecting densely populated areas of the country. While these funds remain far from sufficient to introduce a comprehensive high-speed rail system in our nation, they are a critical first step in this direction.

Based on these federal initiatives, this renewed focus on 21st century rail travel in the United States has a range of positive outcomes. For instance, focusing on the more populated areas of the country will ensure greater efficiencies as people (and some goods) move more quickly between the nation's major population centers. Reducing the number of vehicles from the nation's highways will reduce congestion while lowering the emission of carbon monoxide into the environment, along with reducing air pollution and our dependence on imported oil. Finally, the research and development, construction and subsequent maintenance of these high-speed rail systems will lead to a host of direct and indirect economic benefits that would spur economic growth in the relevant cities and adjacent areas.

As Congress and the administration discuss the optimal approach to authorize new federal transportation legislation, it is evident that there continues to be a great deal of interest in continuing this federal role in both funding and encouraging the expansion of high-speed rail corridors across the United States. Specifically, the proposal submitted by Congressman James L. Oberstar, Minnesota, chair of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (*The Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009: A Blueprint for Investment and Reform*) for review and discussion by the different stakeholders provides \$50 billion over six years to develop the aforementioned 11 high-speed rail corridors.

This resolution was originally adopted by the Southern Legislative Conference at the 2009 SLC Annual Meeting in Winston-Salem, NC.

### **Additional Resource Information**

- Federal Railroad Administration  
<http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/31>
- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee briefing materials and draft legislation for next transportation policy authorization:
  - [H.R. Committee Print](#)
  - [Executive Summary of the Blueprint](#)
  - [Federal Surface Transportation Framework](#)
  - [Blueprint for Investment and Reform](#)
  - [High-Speed Rail Corridors](#)
  - [High-Speed Rail Corridors Descriptions](#)

### **CSG Management Directives**

**Management Directive #1:** CSG will support state and federal efforts to promote the development and improvement of high-speed rail throughout the United States.

**Management Directive #2:** CSG staff will post the approved resolution on CSG's web site and make it available through its regular communication venues at the state and local levels to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS**

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The Council of State Governments recommends that states work cooperatively where appropriate to enter into multistate agreements and interstate compacts to enhance the potential for federal high-speed rail funding.

The Council of State Governments also recommends that states work proactively to create public-private partnerships to promote the development, improvement and expansion of both existing and new rail lines, where applicable, alongside creating specific economic incentives to achieve this important objective.

The Council of State Governments encourages states to work with the entire range of stakeholders in this process including officials with AMTRAK, private railroad companies and other related organizations to promote high-speed rail across the country.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_Day of November, 2009 at the CSG Annual Conference in La Quinta, California

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Governor Joe Manchin III, West Virginia  
2009 CSG President

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Sen. Bart Davis, Idaho  
2009 CSG Chair