

## **A Comparative Analysis of Public Benefit from the “Crescent Corridor” and “Steel Interstate” Rail Service Concepts**

### What is the Crescent Corridor?

The Crescent Corridor initiative by Norfolk Southern covers a 13-state, north/south corridor from New Jersey to Louisiana. The project consists of upgrades and new expansions to its rail lines and intermodal terminals to enhance train speed, reliability, capacity, and truck competitiveness along the route. The type of intermodal service to be offered would be primarily for freight in stackable containers that can be crane or fork-lifted from the truck trailer chassis aboard railcars.

Previously NS was successful in pursuing a similar program of line and facility improvements on its Heartland Corridor, running in an east/west alignment between the port of Hampton Roads in Virginia, and a Midwest distribution terminal in Columbus, Ohio. The model used in the Heartland Corridor is again being employed for the Crescent Corridor, involving efforts by the railroad to encourage public investment participation by the project states.

The main inducement offered to state governments to participate seems to be promises of removing trucks from congested highways, thus reducing the highway maintenance and new capacity construction needs of those states. NS also emphasizes the safety, cost savings, competitiveness, environmental, and energy-savings benefits of switching freight from truck to rail.

Its campaign is very professional and well-organized. A more recent dimension has evolved in which NS seeks, in addition to financial support, the political support of constituent states to secure federal transportation funding and support in Washington for the Crescent Corridor. In conjunction with the states of Pennsylvania, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia, NS has applied for a \$300 million TIGER grant from federal stimulus funding.

### What is good about it?

**Public awareness of rail** is being increased. For too many decades during the build-out of the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System, constructing more lanes of highway was looked to as the only answer to problems of congestion and growth. During this period rail infrastructure in the U.S. atrophied significantly. Now the nation’s rail system is inadequate to meet renewed shipping demand as growth has taxed the capacity of the nation’s highways. That NS is out there, in print and broadcast media, with its attractive Crescent Corridor brochure, and with representatives appearing at state and local government meetings throughout the corridor, gives the public new hope and awareness that alternatives might exist to more highway construction.

**Environmental benefits of rail** are being emphasized by Norfolk Southern. Understanding of the “green” elements of rail transportation is helpful to the national transportation debate. A citizenry and its elected officials can make more informed decisions on transportation investment with an appreciation of all the benefits rail can provide. NS has been good at emphasizing the health and safety benefits of fewer trucks on the road – fewer crashes and deaths, less pollution, and lowered emissions of greenhouse gases playing to climate change concerns. Its campaign also regularly focuses on the greater energy efficiency of transporting a ton of freight by train than by truck.

**More balanced investment in surface transportation** may result. In other countries around the world, when new capacity is needed for movement of goods or people, it is commonplace to weigh investment trade-offs in different transportation modes and steer capital to projects where the environmental and economic costs are lowest. We don't do this in the United States. Virtually all of the surface transportation dollars spent over the past 50 years have gone to highways. So if Norfolk Southern's campaign results in even a tiny shift in this paradigm, public investment in transportation may be better targeted to achieve the best return and lowest costs.

#### What is not so good?

**Public benefit must exceed public cost** if commitment of taxpayer dollars is to be justified. Norfolk Southern has been weak and inconsistent in this area. Benefits have been robustly described but poorly quantified. Sources for numbers, such as truck diversions projected for individual states, have not been supported or shared. Failure to make a solid case for public benefits exceeding the public cost risks criticism and public perception that contribution of taxpayer dollars to Crescent Corridor improvements will only benefit and enrich a private company, its executives and shareholders, even if that were not true. To weigh intelligently the commitment of funds, a state, or the federal, government deserves a solid business plan with supportable numbers. Only that way can its return on investment in the Crescent Corridor be evaluated alongside other potential public outlays.

**The public may fund NS improvements that** the railroad would otherwise need to make itself anyway out of competitive necessity. This makes it doubly difficult to assess the incremental benefits of public participation. Public participation in rail investment can make good sense, but a public agenda of rail improvements, *that the private rail carriers would not themselves be likely to undertake*, seems like a more fruitful and justifiable realm for such activity. Examples might include higher-speed train operations, frequent and reliable passenger train service, elimination of grade crossings for improved public safety, intermodal service usable by all types of trucks, and electrification of lines to reduce oil consumption.

**Elements of the plan lack credibility**, most importantly the likelihood that the projected diversions of trucks from highways in the Crescent Corridor would actually be realized. The overall NS goal is more than one million fewer trucks annually on the highways of the Corridor. Is this realistic and attainable? In the NS Crescent Corridor brochure individual diversions are given for 5 corridor states: AL, TN, PA, VA, and MS. Together these total 3.229 million trucks per year. Of course, because NS uses a length of truck haul of approximately 1,000 miles, many trucks travel in multiple states, so a total of individual states larger than the total truck number is to be expected. The Virginia number is 878,000. No indication is given on how the number was derived, so the public is left to assess its reasonableness.

VDOT traffic counts show about 14,000 trucks per day on I-81. Annualized that makes around 5 million. 878,000 represents about 17%. *And that assumes that the entire VA number comes off I-81.* The Crescent Corridor map shows two principal lines in VA, so the VA trucks-off-the-highway number no doubt would include diversion from U.S. 29, I-66, I-95, I-77, and other routes as well. Thus the impact on I-81, where trucking densities are highest and public concerns greatest, could be considerably less than 17%.

In a Town Hall Meeting on rail sponsored by Senator John Edwards in Roanoke on October 7, 2009, Kevin Page of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation made a presentation that included a foam-board exhibit on the Crescent Corridor. It contained the number that 592,000 trucks would be removed from I-81 in Virginia by 2035. The following week on October 12 Darrell Wilson from Norfolk Southern's Washington, DC office made a presentation to the I-81 Corridor Coalition Conference at Hotel Roanoke in which his slides showed 707,000 trucks diverted from I-81 in Virginia by the NS Crescent Corridor proposal. The following day at the same conference Virginia Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer's PowerPoint presentation showed 1,364 units per day, or 500,000 trucks per year diverted from I-81. The slide cites from the TIGER grant application a Benefit/Cost Ratio of 8.9 using a 7% discount rate. The slide also contains this caveat, "Delivery of anticipated benefits not guaranteed." Then on October 27, 2009, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation provided a Draft Final Report of *Feasibility Plan for Maximum Truck to Rail Diversion in Virginia's I-81 Corridor*. The main contractor on this study is Cambridge Systematics, the same firm hired by NS to do its TIGER grant application. The Draft Final Report says on p. 3-18, "the Crescent Corridor aims to divert the year 2008 equivalent of at least 1,300 trucks per day from I-81." Multiplied by 365, that produces 474,500. There is a troubling randomness and lack of precision in these NS estimates. But for the benefit of the doubt, let's use the largest one, 878,000.

Two questions logically follow: 1) is the 878,000 diversion number realistically achievable? and 2) would it represent a meaningful and significant reduction in trucks on Interstate 81 worth the public investment NS seeks?

**1. The projected truck diversion is unrealistic** chiefly because the Crescent Corridor is focused on standard, double-stack intermodal handling of

containers. This service model features vast, regional terminals with crane loading of containers into well cars, to accommodate the double stack clearances. Cost and time delays of the terminal operation require long rail hauls to recoup or amortize the delay in order to match truck travel times. The service can only be competitive on trips where truckers would have to stop overnight several times.

At a recent, typical August 25, 2009 presentation in Harrisburg, PA it was clear that *intermodal freight rail means double stacked containers to NS*. There was no acknowledgment of the existence or possibility of other intermodal concepts in their presentation. In the explanation to the public, intermodal rail *was defined as* double stacked container service several times. NS said its yard at Harrisburg would be reconfigured to allow for an increase in volume from about 800 to 1100 containers per day. Containers will be stored, and double handled with either a gantry style crane that can lift from the top or bottom, or from the side with a giant forklift. Very few truck trailers (known as dry vans) can withstand this kind of crane handling. Most of those that can belong to the major truckers such as Schneider, Swift, and J. B. Hunt, who buy these special, stronger trailers in order to build versatility into their fleets and operations.

Railroads have attempted in recent years to address this limitation and expand their intermodal market by persuading the big truckers who are the major current users of standard intermodal to switch more extensively to domestic containerization. But the domestic containerization initiative does nothing for the tens of thousands of truckers on the highway every day who have no intention or interest in using rail. Generally speaking, standard intermodal is mature. Trains are long and slow, terminals are sprawling and expensive. The concept fits the rail industry metric of maximizing gross ton miles per freight train hour, more than providing a true highway-competitive service.

Norfolk Southern CEO Wick Moorman, addressed a non-profit benefit dinner on October 19, 2006 at Hotel Roanoke, which he characterized as a “coming out party” for NS strategy in the I-81 Corridor.

He mentioned specifically that the I-81 market is highly fragmented; that it is mostly trucks (in contrast to the conventional container orientation of, say, the Chicago – New York market); that many are mom-and-pops; and that a prerequisite for capturing the I-81 truck traffic would be a more open intermodal strategy that can carry all kinds of trucks. He did a great job explaining this distinction in terms his non-transportation audience could understand.

Today something is missing in the NS PowerPoint presentations and brochures on the I-81 Crescent Corridor. Nowhere do we see addressed the special characteristics of the I-81 market that Wick Moorman elucidated so well in October, 2006, predating the 2007 Crescent Corridor debut. There is no focus on the mom-and-pops. No open intermodal dimension applicable to all trucks.

Container business is dominated by large companies. The narrowly-focused NS design parameters exclude nearly all of the owner-operators, mid-size and small truckers that are dominant in the Corridor. That's where the real volume is and where the really exciting diversion potential lies. So its omission from the Crescent Corridor project is both puzzling and disappointing.

"Although the majority of the corridor volumes – 53% -- represent dry-van freight (the type of traffic that is most competitive for intermodal transport), 47% of the freight is moving in tank, hopper, flat, automobile, and livestock trailers, and as such is currently difficult if not impossible to convert to conventional rail intermodal technologies," concluded the Reebie Associates study for Virginia dated December 15, 2003 [*The Northeast-Southeast-Midwest Corridor Marketing Study Examining the Potential to Divert Highway Traffic from Interstate 81 to Rail Intermodal Movement*, p. 26]. That study also sheds light on the inability to handle many dry van highway trailers altogether in standard rail intermodal service:

"In order to be employed in rail intermodal service a trailer must be constructed or "equipped" to withstand the vertical lift on and off of the rail car. In general, rail intermodal movements require the use of spring-ride, lift bed, or "reinforced" trailers. Such trailers represent only a small portion of the trailers on the road today. In fact, current estimates are that as few as 30% of the trailers in service today on the I-81 corridor are rail intermodal compatible."

So in Reebie's assessment, only 53% of the trailers, the dry vans, are candidates for standard intermodal handling, and only 30% of those are strong enough to withstand the rigors of crane lifting. Multiplication of these percents yields only 16% of the trailers on I-81 as Crescent Corridor diversion candidates. NS would have to divert virtually all of these to meet its goal.

In conclusion, Norfolk Southern's Crescent Corridor plan focuses on double-stack containers. Failure to remove trucks from the highway by offering an open-intermodal service beneficial to all truckers makes it completely implausible that its diversion goals in Virginia could be realized.

**2. The forecast of resulting truck diversion is too small to matter**, even if it were realized. One million trucks removed from highways across a 13-state corridor would be barely recognizable. The same is even true of the 878,000 (or much less!) indicated for Virginia. It could even be completely eclipsed by normal trucking growth during the period of Crescent Corridor construction.

Table I on page 6 projects the base of 3 million through trucks per year on I-81 in Virginia over the next 25 years, using a 2.8% annual growth rate, which is what both VDOT and NS use in their studies. Notice that normal projected trucking growth completely erases the 878,000 gain in truck diversions by mid-way through the tenth year. And much of that time the Crescent Corridor improvements would still be being put in place and not yet fully operable or competitive. Thus it is no leap to conclude

that when the system does go into full operation, the truck diversion projected by NS would be largely invisible and undetectable, having been already largely offset by growth in the interim construction period. Table II shows that even at an annual trucking growth rate as low as 1%, the trucks diverted by Crescent Corridor would be replaced by growth by 2035. If we use the 474,500 truck diversion number from the October 27 Draft Final Report cited above, the diversion, if it does occur, would be totally offset by growth in 6 years using Table I, and 15 years under Table II growth rates.

**TABLE I**

YEAR	THROUGH TRUCKS	GROWTH RATE	YEAR END
1	3000000	1.028	3084000
2	3084000	1.028	3170352
3	3170352	1.028	3259122
4	3259122	1.028	3350377
5	3350377	1.028	3444188
6	3444188	1.028	3540625
7	3540625	1.028	3639763
8	3639763	1.028	3741676
9	3741676	1.028	3846443
10	3846443	1.028	3954143
11	3954143	1.028	4064859
12	4064859	1.028	4178675
13	4178675	1.028	4295678
14	4295678	1.028	4415957
15	4415957	1.028	4539604
16	4539604	1.028	4666713
17	4666713	1.028	4797381
18	4797381	1.028	4931708
19	4931708	1.028	5069795
20	5069795	1.028	5211750
21	5211750	1.028	5357679
22	5357679	1.028	5507694
23	5507694	1.028	5661909
24	5661909	1.028	5820443
25	5820443	1.028	5983415

**TABLE II**

YEAR	THROUGH TRUCKS	GROWTH RATE	YEAR END
1	3000000	1.01	3030000
2	3030000	1.01	3060300
3	3060300	1.01	3090903
4	3090903	1.01	3121812
5	3121812	1.01	3153030
6	3153030	1.01	3184560
7	3184560	1.01	3216406
8	3216406	1.01	3248570
9	3248570	1.01	3281056
10	3281056	1.01	3313866
11	3313866	1.01	3347005
12	3347005	1.01	3380475
13	3380475	1.01	3414280
14	3414280	1.01	3448423
15	3448423	1.01	3482907
16	3482907	1.01	3517736
17	3517736	1.01	3552913
18	3552913	1.01	3588442
19	3588442	1.01	3624327
20	3624327	1.01	3660570
21	3660570	1.01	3697176
22	3697176	1.01	3734148
23	3734148	1.01	3771489
24	3771489	1.01	3809204
25	3809204	1.01	3847296

Virginia is in the process of developing a Freight Rail Plan for the state. Cambridge Systematics is the consultant engaged for this task. Alan Meyers is the principal in charge of the research. In an e-mail of September 2, 2008, Meyers discusses benefit calculation of truck diversion under Crescent Corridor (CC): "Problems are (a) the CC generates very few of the types of benefits that these models were designed to capture and (b) the benefit is small enough and focused enough that the highway tax revenue loss becomes a visible and significant

[*offsetting*] effect...If we take some trucks off the road, it does free up a limited amount of additional capacity, but...the change in road performance would not be that significant, and outside of the peak period it would be invisible."

A less than 17% reduction in trucking would not eliminate the need for economically and environmentally costly doubling of I-81 capacity in years ahead as embraced by Virginia Department of Transportation. VDOT is on record saying that truck diversion would have to reach 60% or more of through trucks from I-81 to affect the need for massive highway widening. Without savings on the new road construction side, quantifying a positive return on public investment in the Crescent Corridor becomes extremely problematic.

### What is the Steel Interstate?

RAIL Solution has advocated a high-performance, open intermodal approach, as mentioned by Wick Moorman in his October 2006 talk. It would feature compact terminals, with quick, easy drive-on, drive-off loading and unloading of trucks – with or without their cabs and drivers. Trains would carry the trucks through the I-81 Corridor from terminals in Knoxville, TN and Harrisburg, PA, truly offering the potential to remove the required 60% of through trucks from I-81.

This can only be achieved by improving rail infrastructure sufficiently to provide the speed, reliability, capacity and cost such a competitive service would require, including double tracking, elimination of grade crossings, modern train control systems, and eventual electrification. The template for the Steel Interstate open intermodal highway-speed system is already in use in other countries.

### What is good about it?

A Steel Interstate high-performance open intermodal system would reach more sectors of the shipping industry, and preserve jobs and the competitive viability of mid-size and small truckers including owner-operated trucks. Here is what Cambridge Systematics' Meyers has said about the diversion challenge in removing trucks from I-81 in Virginia:

"Trucks showing up on I-81 are moving freight that already had the option to use rail and chose not to, for whatever reason. At that point, well into their trips, there is little to no chance of separating the drivers from their loads. The only opportunity for diversion is to offer the drivers a better way to get their freight – and themselves—to their destination." [*Feasibility Plan for Truck to Rail Diversion in Virginia's I-81 Corridor*, Draft Final Report, February 28, 2009, p. 43]

He is focusing on the need for an open-intermodal service that can carry all trucks, trailers, drivers, and all. Reebie's analysis from 2003 substantiates this point. In their April 1, 2003 Draft Report (still the best Virginia diversion study we have), they segment the truckers into Large, Mid-Sized, and Small, and describe the

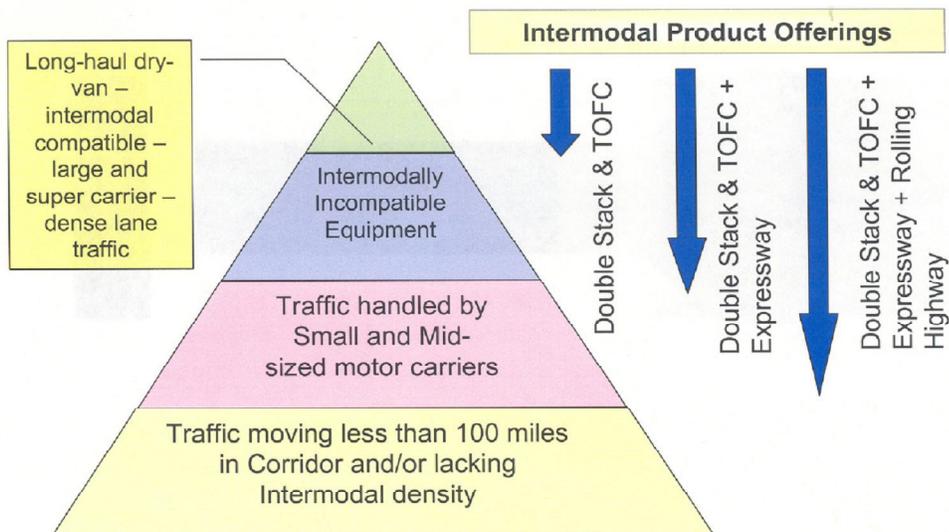
characteristics of each. The percentages they determine in the I-81 corridor of Virginia are respectively: 28%, 14%, and 58%. Reebie concludes that the Large ones are most suitable candidates for standard intermodal diversion. Mid-size and Small truckers, together 72% of the trucks on I-81, require an open-intermodal approach.

Below is a graphic from a PowerPoint presentation made by Reebie's Joseph Bryan in September, 2003 to the AASHTO Standing Committee on Rail Transportation. The pyramid is a useful representation easily grasped by an ordinary citizen. The top, smallest triangle (green) represents the largest truckers operating intermodal-compatible equipment. The first blue arrow shows that these are potentially divertible using double stack and TOFC service such as Crescent Corridor. The next slice of the pyramid (gray) represents truckers using non-intermodally compatible trailers, such as the 47% mentioned earlier. The second blue arrow indicates these could be competitively lured with the addition of Expressway service where truck trailers are driven onto trains. This concept is used in Canada between Montreal and Toronto. The third tier of the pyramid (pink) shows the small and mid-sized motor carriers, which would need the addition of rolling highway (truck ferry) service to be diverted to rail.



## MARKET SEGMENTATION

### Expanding the Product Portfolio:



Crescent Corridor can compete for the green. Steel Interstate provides the capacity and versatility to compete for the green, the gray, and the pink. It would be a far more worthwhile use of public funds to embrace a public private partnership with this broader capability. The broader accessibility, and highway-competitive travel times of the Steel Interstate, would provide sufficiently robust service and capacity to easily handle not only the majority of the freight currently moving by long distance truck on I-81, but the tremendous growth projected by U.S. DOT in years ahead.

Investment in rail capacity and performance improvements in the I-81 corridor to provide transportation system redundancy at highway level-of-service for moving goods, personnel, and materiel critical to national security and disaster response, dovetails with U.S. Department of Defense identification of I-81 as a key STRACNET corridor. Furthermore, the flexibility, efficiency, and relative lack of vulnerability to disruption of Steel Interstate drive-on drive-off "circus-style" rail loading is preferred for defense and emergency uses.

The smaller footprint of the terminals needed for Steel Interstate open intermodal service increases the chances of finding appropriately-sized "brownfield" sites for re-development, and reduces the loss of large areas of farm land identified for Crescent Corridor style terminals.

The clearance height for trucks on Steel Interstate rail cars is lower than for the double stack container configuration of the Crescent Corridor, which would allow rail system electrification to move forward more quickly and cheaply by reducing the need to raise tunnel heights to provide room for the overhead catenary.

Electrification and developing the capacity to generate the power from renewable sources moves the rail industry toward true sustainability, as well as mitigating the air quality and noise impacts of the increased number of trains on local residents and communities.

Electrification, tied to an aggressive schedule for developing renewable power sources, also doubles the public investment benefit by reducing reliance on foreign oil as well as our national carbon footprint by curtailing greenhouse gas emissions -- a practical and responsible initiative to address global warming. Electrification also opens up the possibility for using rail corridors for additional transmission capacity needed to convey renewable energy from the places of generation to points of use.

A Steel Interstate pilot project in the I-81 corridor would bring a clean, sustainable, and innovative economic stimulus project with respected, living wage jobs to the historically underserved and economically depressed multi-state Appalachian region of the country.

Designing and constructing a cutting edge Steel Interstate rail system puts America back to work developing expertise in and gaining experience with innovative,

energy efficient systems and technology, rather than waiting for the other countries now investing heavily in advanced rail and renewable energy systems to sell them to us.

By reaching the threshold of diverting at least 60% of the through trucks from I-81 to rail, the Steel Interstate can vastly reduce public spending on additional highway capacity. Eliminated altogether would be the associated economically ruinous and deeply unpopular highway tolling in the corridor, and corridor-wide highway widening to 8 or more lanes as Virginia DOT determined would be needed for the highway option in its Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement.

As an August 1, 2009 article in the *Washington Post* pointed out, safety on an interstate like I-81, where high numbers of trucks mix with automobiles, is an issue that the public is deeply concerned about. Completely removing the majority of the long-distance trucks from the highway to trains on the Steel Interstate would make a substantial improvement in safety and be a level of improvement the public could actually see. At the same time, the addition of passenger rail service to the Steel Interstate system would provide even greater comfort, safety, and mobility to students attending the corridor's many colleges and universities, the growing proportion of senior citizens, tourists, and the general traveling public.

Another significant public concern raised during the evaluation of highway expansion in the I-81 corridor was the threat to the many Civil War battlefields and other historic sites. Such impacts would be greatly reduced by the much smaller footprint of the Steel Interstate compared with an 8-lane highway project.

### What are the challenges?

Norfolk Southern's Shenandoah line and right-of-way currently parallel I-81 between Knoxville, TN and Harrisburg, PA. But the line would need extensive rebuilding, double-tracking, and grade separation to provide the speed, reliability, and capacity to support a Steel Interstate operation. Pioneering in such a venture would be a true public private partnership opportunity for private rail companies and the American public.

In this case, NS could bring to the table its existing right of way, equipment, infrastructure, and railroad operating experience, where public investment can stretch them to new uses such as a Steel Interstate high-performance open intermodal rail system, setting a new national intermodal paradigm. As noted, these greatly expanded uses would provide real and very significant public benefits. By contrast, NS will almost certainly be able to attract sufficient private capital to build its business plan guided improvements of the Crescent Corridor on its own.

Although other countries are already investing in and operating Steel Interstate-type rail systems, the U.S. lacks experience in the design, construction,

and operation of Steel Interstate service, and thus it would be prudent to start with a pilot project in a corridor with favorable conditions such as the I-81 corridor before expanding the system nationwide. An article in the January/February issue of the *Washington Monthly* by Phillip Longman titled "Back on Tracks" discusses in detail the characteristics of the I-81 corridor that make it the prime corridor for the Steel Interstate pilot project.

Public investments in the Crescent Corridor alone won't yield increased public benefits that could accrue from adding the infrastructure and providing time-sensitive freight service of the Steel Interstate. The true public benefit for states along the Corridor comes from diverting 60% or more of through-truck traffic, eliminating the need to construct and maintain far more costly and environmentally damaging new interstate highway capacity. Further, nothing in Norfolk Southern's proposal supports the introduction of fast north-south passenger service, unavailable in the I-81 Corridor for a generation. The public could help bring these significant benefits to life with project financing through a public-private partnership with NS that challenges NS to offer entirely new services meeting clear public needs. Both could share in new revenues to be derived from hauling truck traffic now on I-81. Bold and committed federal leadership, and political will and courage, are essential to making it happen.

Like the original trans-continental rail system, Eisenhower Interstate Highway System, Panama Canal, Space Program or any other major investment in a pioneering, nation-building initiative, the I-81 corridor Steel Interstate pilot project – and eventual completion of a National Steel Interstate System - will require a substantial public investment. It is likely, however, that the return-on-investment for the public will be excellent, and life-cycle costs much less than for road-based alternatives.

### What next?

RAIL Solution's effort on behalf of an open-intermodal approach in the I-81 corridor has focused mainly on two aspects. One is to acquaint elected officials and government policy-makers with the concept and many advantages of an electrified National Steel Interstate System. A white paper written by RAIL Solution provides more details about the benefits to national security, international economic competitiveness, energy conservation, reduced emissions and climate change benefits, energy independence, infrastructure stimulus, public health and safety, and ensuring mobility of both people and goods in a time of Peak Oil. The paper is on the web at <http://www.railsolution.org/projects/steel-interstate/steel-interstate-position-paper.html>

The second focus has been to educate residents in towns and counties throughout the corridor about rail options for a balanced and integrated transportation system, and urge local support for a high-performance open intermodal approach with a demonstration Steel Interstate pilot project in the I-81 corridor between Knoxville and Harrisburg. So far, over 50 Virginia and Tennessee counties, cities,

and planning districts in the I-81 corridor have passed resolutions in support of the Steel Interstate concept and a growing number of legislators and groups have also endorsed the resolution.

Fortuitously, others, along with RAIL Solution, have recognized the necessity of dealing with the transportation system issues in the I-81 corridor on a multi-state and national basis. Most recently this led to the organization of the I-81 Corridor Coalition in 2007. This group adds to the unique opportunity in the I-81 corridor for initiating the Steel Interstate pilot project in an environment where collaboration and a desire for innovative solutions already exists.

With the support of over 50 local governments and regional planning bodies in Virginia and Tennessee alone, the I-81 Corridor offers unparalleled public support for pioneering the new Steel Interstate system in the U.S. The introduction of highway-speed, open intermodal service would serve as an example to the entire nation of the capabilities of 21<sup>st</sup> Century rail technology. The true federal role here should be to promote the kind of rail development that will serve as a blueprint for America's rail future.

The leadership of the Obama Administration and Congress is needed now!



[www.railsolution.org](http://www.railsolution.org)

**September 1, 2009; revised October 23, 2009;  
revised November 19, 2009**