

Steel Interstate: Renewing America's rail network for safer, cleaner, faster, more reliable movement of people and goods

Today a dollar buys more U.S. freight-carrying capacity when invested in rail than when spent on highway lanes. To understand why, think of the Steel Interstate as analogous to Interstate Highways built over the last 50 years.

The Interstate Highway System gave us a core national network of roads that made travel faster and safer than on the old system of U.S. Highway Routes. Today's railroads are like those old roads – built long ago and often lacking in capacity to reliably handle today's growing freight and passenger demand. But they, too, can be rebuilt, resulting in a grade-separated, high-capacity, electrified national system of key rail corridors.

Rail surpasses highways in safety, less emissions (including greenhouse gases), greater energy efficiency, lower cost, and less land requirements. But there is also a national security consideration. Today in the U.S., our transportation system is 97% dependent on oil. We need to plan now to cope in a world where oil is no longer affordable nor easily available for transportation.

Railroads can readily be electrified, so Steel Interstates can be powered by many energy sources. Because of the greater efficiency of moving freight by rail, a one percent increase in domestic electric generation, readily achieved with renewables or conservation, could save 7% of the nation's oil use. This would keep billions of dollars at home annually to promote jobs and economic growth. Electrified rail corridors could also support green energy by helping transmit remote wind or solar power to urban markets.

With proper investments over years to come, we can have a core national Steel Interstate System in place before oil becomes prohibitively expensive. Such a network of high-capacity, electrified rail lines would be the backbone for fast, efficient movement of freight and passengers for 21st Century America.

Besides passenger trains and conventional freight, the Steel Interstate could accommodate long-distance trucks carried on board trains. The nation needs an "open" intermodal approach, a technology that can readily handle not only shipping containers, but all kinds of trucks and trailers.



Entire trucks drive off a train at Freiburg, Germany



Canadian Pacific E>x<pressway service for trailers



RoadRailer involves putting railroad wheels under trailers

U.S. railroads have done a great job developing long-haul intermodal business, but it is focused almost entirely on double-stacked containers, mostly to and from ocean ports. Millions of trucks on the nation's highways remain a huge untapped opportunity and challenge. Currently much of the railroad system in the United States lacks the capacity, reliability, and speed needed for highway-competitive handling of trucks.

The time has come to explore innovative public and private financing options for a Steel Interstate operated for profit by private enterprise. RAIL Solution is working to grow the North American Steel Interstate Coalition to pursue this goal. Read more about NASIC on the other side. The Steel Interstate concept and benefits are detailed more fully at: www.steelinterstate.org

North American Steel Interstate Coalition

A New Vision for Railroads in the 21st Century



ELEMENTS OF STEEL INTERSTATE DESIGN: A minimum of two grade-separated *through* tracks, engineered, signaled, and dispatched for 79 MPH to 110 MPH, offering frequent, reliable service. The electrified Steel Interstate System would create adequate capacity to divert most non-local truck freight to intermodal trains, and to accommodate passenger trains without impairing freight operations.

WE ARE ON THE CUSP OF A TRANSPORTATION CRISIS: Oil is a rapidly diminishing resource. In April, 2010, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) predicted “massive” world oil shortages by 2015. Because of near total oil dependency, United States travel and shipping are especially vulnerable to price spikes and supply disruption. World oil production is not keeping pace with demand, especially from rapidly growing Far East economies, resulting in steadily rising gasoline and diesel fuel prices. Vehicle miles traveled have dropped. The U.S. Highway Trust Fund cannot afford new roads; maintenance of old ones consumes all its money. Major road projects are also being viewed as increasingly unacceptable from an environmental standpoint, and new capacity can be realized at lower cost through rail modernization.

SOLUTION! A HIGH-PERFORMANCE RAIL SYSTEM: The Millennium Institute finds that a major shift to rail-based shipping and passenger transportation powered by electricity from renewable sources could significantly reduce our dependency on imported oil and greatly reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. We could, if we act now, add needed transport capacity, assure affordable mobility, and improve our standard of living for decades to come. Substitution of domestically generated electricity for foreign oil means billions of dollars now going abroad to pay for oil can be redeployed here at home to create jobs, growth, economic opportunity, and pay for the Steel Interstate investment.

JOIN THE REBIRTH OF U.S. RAIL—THE NORTH AMERICAN STEEL INTERSTATE COALITION. Making the Steel Interstate a reality requires more research and promotion. To capture imaginations and enter our national vision, the concept needs to be considered in all regions. RAIL Solution is spearheading the North American Steel Interstate Coalition and advocating a prototype demonstration in the I-81, I-40 and I-75 Corridors, upgrading existing rail lines between Harrisburg, PA and Memphis, TN. For more information, please visit www.steelinterstate.org Join with these other groups who have already signed on as partners:

**RAIL
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www.railsolution.org



All Aboard Ohio
Virginia Association of Railway Patrons
All Aboard Washington
Texas Rail Advocates
Maine Rail Transit Coalition
Rail, Inc., New Mexico