

OFF THE RAILS

The Billion Dollar Boondoggles
Taking Taxpayers for a Ride

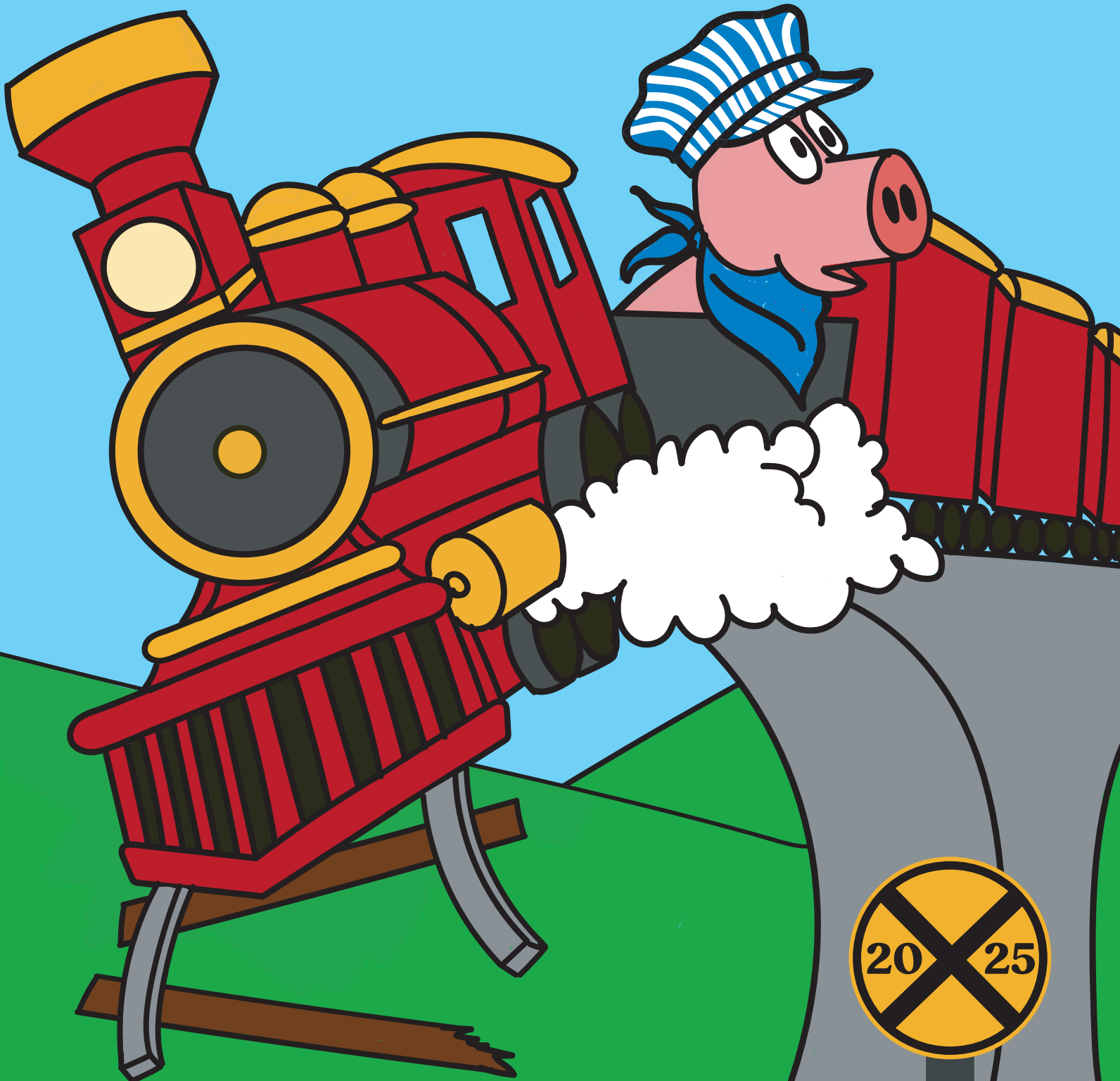


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Introduction: Billion Dollar Boondoggles Abound

Going a billion dollars over budget isn't a rounding error; it's a financial train wreck.

Likewise, being five years behind schedule isn't just losing track of time; it's a derailment.

For too long, taxpayers have been taken for a ride by budget busting boondoggles that keep costing more but never seem to reach the end of the line.

To hold Washington accountable for promises made about costs and timetables, I wrote a provision of law (Section 11319 of Public Law 117-58) requiring the Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue a public report every year disclosing any project that is a billion dollars over budget or five years behind schedule.¹

Predictably, the list itself has missed one deadline after another. The first installment was due in November 2022 but was never delivered. Another year came and went with no report. And then yet another.

While managers of a private company or organization would be expected to account for cost overruns or delays, whether due to a lack of knowledge, bureaucratic indifference, or embarrassment, the Biden administration was unwilling, or unable, to do so. Only a government bureaucracy could get away with being late delivering a report listing its projects that are behind schedule and over budget.

But finally, two-and-a-half-years later, DOT Secretary Sean Duffy unburied the report that was withheld by the Biden administration.²

This "report" that took so long to finish is a one-page chart providing few details, leaving out key information, and even omitting some well-known boondoggles (the document is attached in the appendix of this report, good luck trying to read the small print).

While the DOT report is disappointing for lacking details, simply providing the names and locations of the boondoggles allows us to bring greater transparency and accountability to each and every project on that list.

And that is already happening.

Since 2019, I've been calling for the cancellation of taxpayer funding of California's High-Speed Rail project that is now nearly \$100 billion over budget and more than a decade behind schedule.³

The Trump administration is taking back the \$4 billion⁴ that was going to be wasted on this train to nowhere. That's right, the California crazy train will no longer be choo choo chewing up taxpayer money.

But that isn't the end of the line!

This report outlines other opportunities to save taxpayers billions of dollars by canceling other boondoggles.

Building on the DOT report, ***Off the Rails, The Billion Dollar Boondoggles Taking Taxpayers for a Ride*** digs deeper into the projects on DOT's list and exposes other taxpayer-funded megaprojects that are going off the rails due to poor planning, mismanagement, political plotting, and free fast money from the federal government.

This includes filling in missing details on projects in DOT's boondoggle report, providing a glimpse into problematic projects financed by other government agencies, and making recommendations on how to bring billion dollar boondoggles to a squealing halt.

What the Department of Transportation Report Reveals

The DOT boondoggle report lists **14 projects**.

Of these, the five with the largest cost overruns are collectively more than **\$23 billion** over budget. Five are more than a decade behind schedule. Two projects made it onto both the most over budget and most delayed lists.

There are some significant caveats to some of these numbers that are explored in the next section of this report.

Most Overbudget Transportation Boondoggles

Project	State	Amount Overbudget	Original Cost	Current Cost Estimate
High-Speed Rail, Phase 1	California	\$13 billion	\$5 billion	\$18 billion
Honolulu Rail Transit	Hawaii	\$4.8 billion	\$5.1 billion	\$9.9 billion
Maryland Purple Line Transit	Maryland	\$3.1 billion	\$2.4 billion	\$5.5 billion
Transbay Corridor Core Capacity	California	\$1.3 billion	\$2.7 billion	\$4 billion
Queens Railroad Project	New York	\$1 billion	\$400 million	\$1.4 billion

Most Delayed Transportation Projects

Project	State	Years Behind Schedule	Original Completion Date	Current Completion Date
Columbus Crossroads corridor improvements	Ohio	19 Years	2018	2037
California High-Speed Rail (Phase 1 and follow-up grant)	California	11-12 Years	2017/2018	2029/2030
Honolulu Rail Transit	Hawaii	11 Years	2020	2031
Upgraded Rail Service between Chicago and St. Louis	Illinois/ Missouri	11 Years	2015	2026
Camden Direct Connection	New Jersey	11 Years	2021	2032

The excuses given in the report for the delays and cost overruns include:

- Litigation/investigation (DOT notes that four of the overdue projects are not wrapped up yet as a result of ongoing litigation or investigations but are otherwise complete.);
- Changes in scope or design;
- Utility issues;
- Red tape and environmental reviews; and
- Higher prices/supply chain issues.

While these are rather vague reasons, they raise some interesting questions.

For example, what kind of design change would add more than \$1 billion to the bottom line of any project? That's a pretty big add on.



Hawaii's rail project is \$5 billion over budget and more than eleven years behind schedule.

Transbay Corridor Core Capacity Project (California)

The DOT report says “redesign efforts are still underway” for the Transbay Corridor Core Capacity Project in Oakland, California.⁵

The stated purpose of the project is to “reduce crowding and allow for continued ridership growth.”⁶ This is being done by modernizing the train control system, adding 252 additional railcars, and building a new railcar storage yard.⁷

The upgrades would increase the number of trains operating on the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) from 24 per hour to 30.⁸

DOT says, “The redesign and re-procurement needed for the storage yard has delayed the overall project.”⁹

Rather than redesigning this project, maybe it should be rethought altogether.

Any problems with overcrowding may have resolved themselves amidst the delays and redesigns.

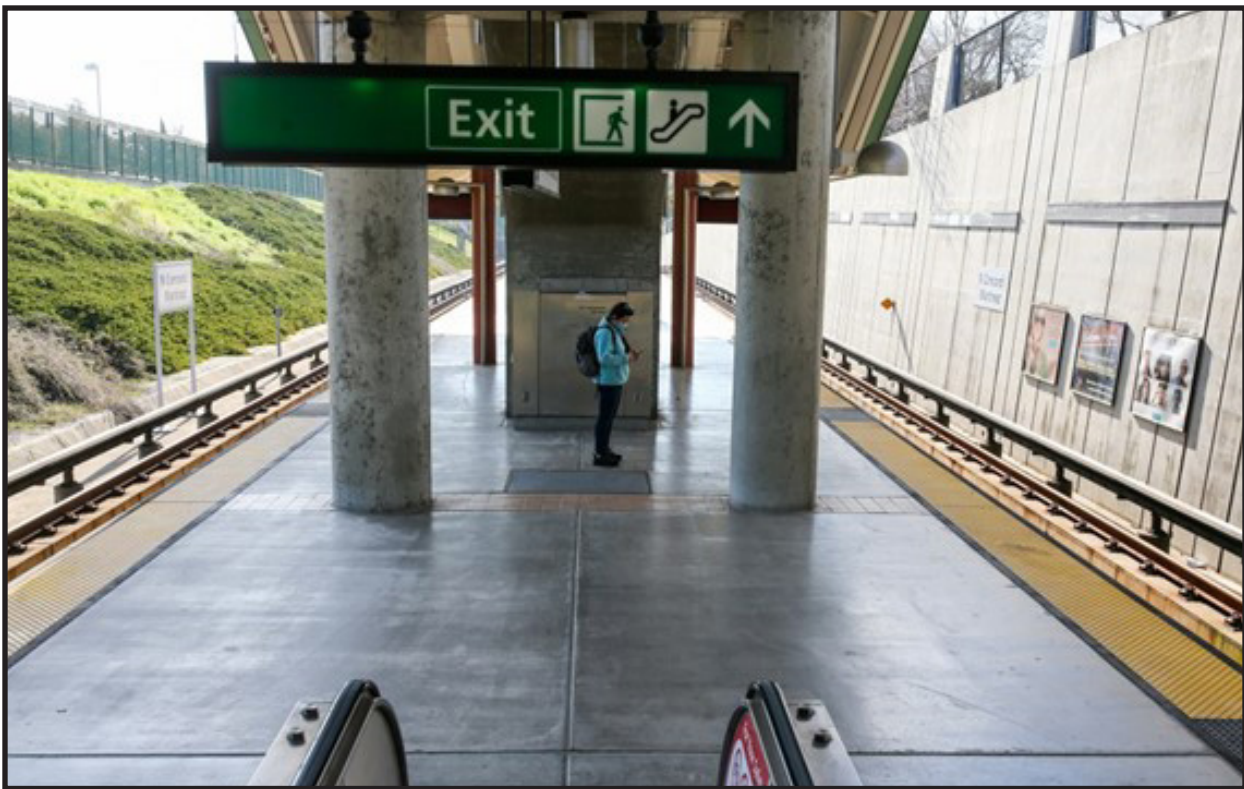
BART ridership was already in decline prior to the pandemic,¹⁰ but trips are now at just 43 percent of pre-COVID levels, according to the California Transportation Commission.¹¹

“On a recent Friday morning at the North Concord BART station, people exiting trains onto the platform were few and far between. Cows grazing placidly on the nearby hillsides seemed more plentiful,” the San Francisco Chronicle recently reported. “It’s no surprise: Ridership at the station was down more than 66 percent in 2024 compared with 2019. And trips to and from downtown San Francisco from the East Bay station were down even more, with 75 percent fewer trips in 2024 than before the pandemic.”¹²

While ridership is dramatically declining, the cost of the project is ballooning. The original price tag of \$2.7 billion is now more than \$4 billion.

Furthermore, the subway is running on emergency federal funds that expire next year. At which point, the train could go over a “fiscal cliff,” according to the transit agency.¹³

Little details like this raise big questions about the future of federal funding for billion-dollar boondoggles. Questions like, why should billions of dollars be spent increasing the capacity of a subway service that has lost so many passengers it can barely afford to stay on the tracks?



Hawaii's rail project is \$5 billion over budget and more than eleven years behind schedule.

What the Department of Transportation Report Doesn't Reveal

The DOT report lacks detailed substantive information to provide a complete picture of the problems with the projects. The public deserves more than a two or three-sentence excuse when a project goes a billion dollars over budget or is delayed by years.

While the explanations given for the delays and cost overruns in the DOT report all sound like fairly typical bureaucratic red tape, I've tracked down the real reasons.

Billions of dollars in cost overruns for the two costliest boondoggles listed in the DOT report—California's High-Speed Rail and Honolulu's Rail Transit Project—are the direct result of massive mismanagement and intentional manipulation to secure fast money from the federal government using bait-and-switch budgeting.

In a bid to grab billions of dollars of Obama bucks, both projects overpromised while underdelivering and overspending.

High Speed Rail (California)

In California's frenzy for "free" cash, construction on the high-speed rail began even before the land was acquired or the plans were complete.

Nevertheless, Washington approved \$6.9 billion for the project¹⁴ (More than \$4 billion remains unspent¹⁵ and applications were submitted for another \$216.6 million).¹⁶

A review by the state auditor confirms the "primary factor" behind the rush to begin the high-speed rail project was to quickly qualify for Obama-era stimulus funds for "shovel ready" projects.¹⁷

While successful in finagling federal funds, the premeditated premature start, in turn, "contributed to billions of dollars in cost overruns."¹⁸

“The Authority has cited the terms of a 2010 federal grant—which originally required construction to be complete by 2017—as the primary factor in its decision to begin construction when it did.”

- Elaine M. Howle, California State Auditor¹⁹

Other politically-driven decisions also needlessly drove up the cost by billions of dollars.

The path of the California railway itself was drawn without regard for cost or convenience, but rather to benefit powerful state politicians. Instead of taking the most direct route, the train track took a detour over mountains and desert, unnecessarily adding as much as \$8 billion to the project's price tag.²⁰

"The dogleg through the desert was only one of several times over the years when the project fell victim to political forces that have added billions of dollars in costs and called into question whether the project can ever be finished," according to *The New York Times*.²¹ "Only now, though, is it becoming apparent how costly the political choices have been. Collectively, they turned a project that might have been built more quickly and cheaply into a behemoth so expensive that, without a major new source of funding, there is little chance it can ever reach its original goal."²²

A review of the project's contracts by the *Washington Free Beacon* also identified millions of dollars in unnecessary costs. These include hiring a consulting firm for DEI trainings and Washington, D.C. lobbyists to provide "congressional advisory services."²³

In addition to omitting these important contributing factors, the full cost and likely date of completion for the rail line are both omitted from DOT's boondoggle report, which instead only focuses on phase one of the project.

The price for this first segment alone has skyrocketed from \$5 billion to \$18 billion.

The total cost of the entire 800-mile rail project, however, is significantly more. Projected to cost \$33 billion in 2008,²⁴ it now could require as much as \$128 billion to complete,²⁵ a cost overrun of \$95 billion!

The train was supposed to be running between Los Angeles and San Francisco by 2020, a goal that is now "scheduled for completion at some unknown future time."²⁶ Even the first segment is "unlikely" to be carrying passengers before 2033.²⁷

A decade has passed since the railroad's groundbreaking.²⁸ While construction is costing about \$1.8 million a day,²⁹ no tracks have even been laid.³⁰ By comparison, it took just six years to complete the Transcontinental Railroad.³¹



A decade after the groundbreaking of California's high-speed rail, the state recently celebrated the completion of this bridge with no rails that connects to nothing in the middle of nowhere.³²

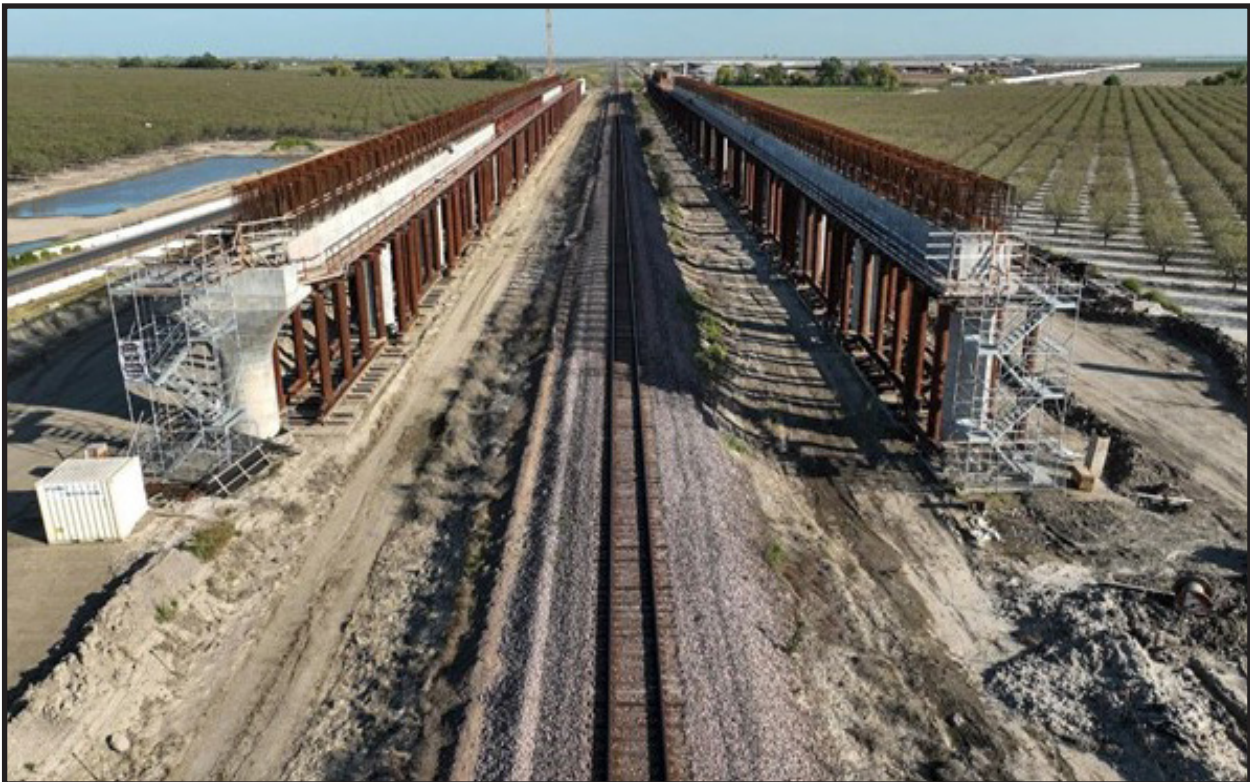
So how does the DOT boondoggle report explain a \$100 billion cost overrun?

It simply says, “The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) has experienced various schedule delays and cost increases over the years. The project has experienced delays in acquiring right-of-way, completing environmental clearances, utility agreements, and advancing construction. Exacerbating this was the 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic which slowed construction progress as well as delays in the court system and public comment periods. These schedule delays have contributed significantly to cost increases. Also, procuring design build contracts in advance of right-of-way acquisition has resulted in design changes and cost increases. More recently, inflation has impacted project costs.”

These mostly mundane excuses largely miss the real reasons behind this boondoggle. A far more detailed review recently issued by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) digs a lot deeper.

The very thorough, 315-page document outlines numerous issues, concluding the California rail “project is in default of the terms of its federal grant awards,” citing “missed deadlines, budget shortfalls, and overrepresentation of projected ridership” as well as “a trail of project delays, mismanagement, waste, and skyrocketing costs.”³³

The FRA summarizes the rail project’s track record in no uncertain terms, “What started as a proposed 800-mile system was first reduced to 500 miles, then became a 171-mile segment, and is now very likely ended as a 119-mile track to nowhere. In essence, CHSRA has conned the taxpayer out of its \$4 billion investment, with no viable plan to deliver even that partial segment on time.”³⁴



California’s High Speed Rail Authority “conned the taxpayer out of its \$4 billion investment, with no viable plan to deliver,” concludes the Federal Railroad Administration.³⁵

Furthermore, “FRA finds that CHSRA cannot support the representations it made when applying for Federal funds under the Cooperative Agreements. In addition, CHSRA’s mismanagement of its commitment to deliver high-speed rail service constitutes persistent non-compliance beginning from the execution of the Cooperative Agreements, which were based on the flawed premise that the CHSR Project would be timely delivered. This follows a recurring pattern of cascading delays that have stymied site work and construction for many years as CHSRA has plodded on with outdated contracts and endless third-party negotiations. Ultimately, a functional system on budget and on schedule appears to be impossible.”³⁶

After this thorough review, the Trump administration canceled federal funding for the project on July 16, 2025.³⁷

This is how you slam the brakes on a boondoggle and bring a runaway gravy train to a squealing halt!

What California promised for billions of dollars:



What California delivered:



Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project (Hawaii)

Just like California's high-speed train to nowhere, the Honolulu's High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project was sold as a "shovel ready" project to lock down dollars from the Obama-Biden stimulus program fifteen years ago.³⁸

It also went off the rails almost immediately,³⁹ becoming a boondoggle in paradise.

The \$9.9 billion price tag to complete the rail service is roughly twice the original estimate. The cost reached \$12.45 billion in 2021,⁴⁰ but 1.25 miles were cut from the planned 20-mile rail line and construction of a \$330 million parking garage was postponed in a scheme to bring down the price and increase the likelihood of receiving more federal funds.⁴¹

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) committed \$1.55 billion to the project in 2012.⁴² To date, more than \$931 million has been provided by DOT. Local "officials are now scrambling to secure the remaining" \$619 million "amid concerns that the incoming Trump administration may be hostile to a project that is already years overdue and over budget."⁴³

Despite numerous warnings from FTA about "weaknesses" in the project's financial plan, the mayor of Honolulu promised in October 2009 the rail service would be "on time, on budget, and on schedule."⁴⁴

A decade later, the state auditor concluded the schedule was never "practical or predictable," noting the mayor's "speech was only the beginning of a pattern of rail officials pledging the Honolulu Rail Transit Project would be built cheaper and faster than was reasonably foreseeable at the time. These promises would be contradicted by delays and cost overruns, which would break the Project's budget and erode public confidence."⁴⁵

The audit concluded, "City officials neglected their responsibility to spend public money prudently" from the beginning when they "prematurely entered into contracts under an artificial timeline and a fragile financial plan." The mayor admitted this was done to avoid losing out on federal funds, stating, "The longer we delay, the greater the chance the money will go away."⁴⁶



Boondoggle in Paradise: Honolulu's High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

The decision to award construction contracts before receiving federal approvals resulted in delay costs, which started accruing almost immediately.⁴⁷

More than \$200 million has been paid to contractors for sitting idle⁴⁸ due to numerous delays resulting from prematurely awarding the contract,⁴⁹ incomplete designs,⁵⁰ and lawsuits.⁵¹

Hundreds of design and construction workers and dozens of subcontractors and suppliers were mobilized for work that could not be done until years after the Rail Authority scheduled it.⁵²

In one instance, contractors were paid \$40 million for “idle work, idle equipment and offices” for more than a year while an archaeological survey was being conducted.⁵³

Another contractor has filed a lawsuit demanding \$324 million for costs caused by delays due to the mismanagement of the project.⁵⁴ If approved, the price tag paid to contractors for not working could exceed more than half-a-billion dollars. That’s a lot of money for doing nothing!



Hard work or hardly working? Contractors are being paid hundreds of millions of dollars to do nothing.⁵⁵

Safety defects and design flaws are also causing delays and cost increases.

The wheels on the train cars didn’t fit the rail properly,⁵⁶ and all the wheels will all have to be replaced.⁵⁷

Some of the train cars failed fire testing and deficiencies were found in the aluminum beams used in the shell of the cars.⁵⁸

Cracks are already forming in the rail system’s tracks, which were supposed to last decades,⁵⁹ and in the overhead supports.⁶⁰ Engineering reports about the extent of the cracks and what should be done about them were late and incomplete.⁶¹

Some of the paddings along the track were faulty and required replacing.⁶²

Construction has stopped on part of the rail route because the design drawings were not complete.⁶³

Calculated efforts were made to hide the cost increases. Staff were ordered to stop cost calculations until the first \$1.5 billion bailout from the state legislature was approved in 2015.⁶⁴ Whistleblowers who claimed they were intimidated to withhold information about the misuse of federal funds were not even questioned for further information and the allegations were not reported to FTA.⁶⁵

The Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART), which is overseeing the rail project, is itself a bloated, mismanaged bureaucracy that lavishes excessive perks on its own executives⁶⁶ and consultants.⁶⁷

The transit's executive director is one of the city's highest-paid employees,⁶⁸ collecting a salary double that of the mayor⁶⁹ in addition to receiving a housing allowance, a transportation stipend,⁷⁰ and bonus⁷¹ after bonus.⁷²

Despite concerns about the job performance of the current executive director, including complaints that she restricted access to information and created a toxic work environment, the Rail Authority board unanimously voted to extend her contract with a \$39,000 raise. This brings her salary up to \$336,000.⁷³

Even after covering up the project's growing financial problems from city and state officials, an executive director who departed in 2016 was rewarded with a nearly \$300,000 golden parachute as severance.⁷⁴

HART was operating with a bureaucracy of 130 staffers⁷⁵ and spending \$12 million a month on its own operating costs.⁷⁶ "I do see quite a bit of redundancies and inefficiencies," admits the latest executive director. "We're paying layers upon layers of not just HART staff, but consultants and contractors and we need to cut that waste out," she added.⁷⁷



As the cost of completing Honolulu's rail doubled, contractors were paid hundreds of millions of dollars to do nothing.

Due to a lack of expertise within its own bureaucracy, the rail agency has relied heavily on consultants, who have been well-compensated. Just 19 contract workers from one firm were paid \$9.6 million in a single year, which is more than \$500,000 each. The state auditor notes this leads to “consultants managing consultants” with little oversight or accountability.⁷⁸

None of these critical details bedeviling the Honolulu rail project are mentioned in DOT’s explanation for delays and cost increases.

To avoid raising any red flags about the real problems plaguing the project, the report simply states, “Multiple unsuccessful attempts to award a construction contract for the Center City Segment has delayed the project and increased the cost. Utility relocation complications and delays also impacted the project schedule and cost.”

The report does mention that “Due to cost increases, the original 20-mile project scope was truncated by 1.25 miles and the last two stations were also eliminated.”⁷⁹ That’s right, taxpayers are being charged more while getting less than promised.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that according to the executive director of the rail authority, “A lot of the feedback from the public is, ‘Just kill it.’”⁸⁰ In fact, the majority of those surveyed in public opinion polls have consistently opposed the project.⁸¹ But the executive director says failure to complete the full route would make it “a train to nowhere” and put the federal funds in jeopardy.⁸²

Billions of Dollars of Boondoggles are Missing from DOT’s Report

The list of over budget projects provided by DOT appears to be incomplete.

At least three other transit projects supported by DOT that are \$1 billion over budget are missing from the list. The good news is that the funds for two of these, approved in the final months of the Biden administration, have not yet been allocated.⁸³

The Silicon Valley Subway Extension (California)

A San Francisco subway extension to Silicon Valley gained notoriety when then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi attempted to earmark \$140 million for the pork project in a “COVID-19 relief” bill. Her plans were derailed when the Senate parliamentarian ruled the earmark violated budget rules.⁸⁴

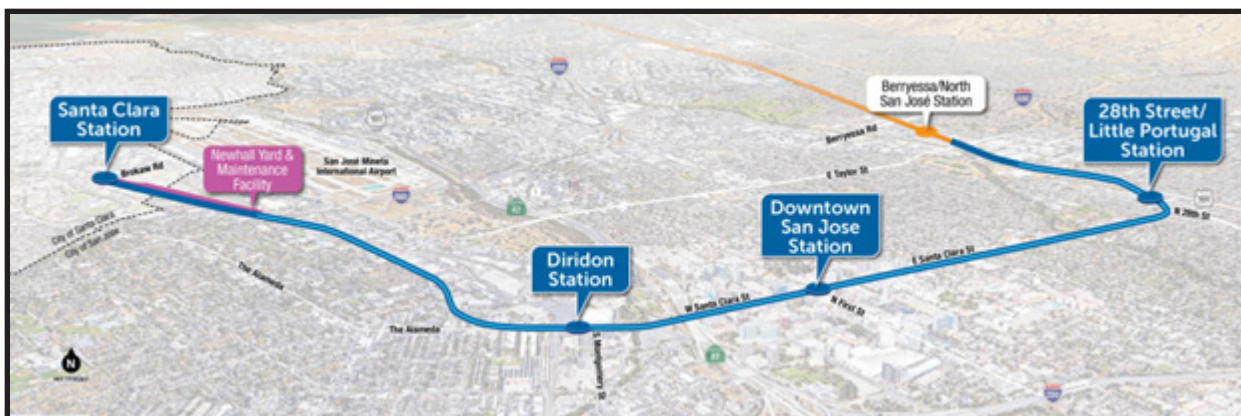
Despite this rejection in Congress, \$5.1 billion of taxpayers’ money was committed to the project by the Biden administration in August 2024.⁸⁵

The cost of a 6.5-mile subway extension to San Jose,⁸⁶ priced at \$4.7 billion in 2018,⁸⁷ is now closer to \$12.8 billion.⁸⁸

At nearly \$2 billion per mile, it’s been labeled “the worst new transit project in the U.S.”⁸⁹

Passenger service was promised in 2026,⁹⁰ but is now only expected to begin in 2039.⁹¹

Since this train hasn’t even left the station yet and it’s already a boondoggle, the Trump administration should consider canceling the federal support and save taxpayers \$5.1 billion.



A Silicon Valley subway extension costing \$2 billion per mile is being called the worst transit project in the U.S.

Downtown San Francisco Rail Extension & Transit Center (California)

Last year, the Biden administration also committed \$3.4 billion to another San Francisco transit project with a troubled history, an extension of the local Caltrain rail service.⁹²

Costing more than \$6 billion per mile, the 1.3-mile Caltrain extension⁹³ is one of the most expensive transit projects in the world.⁹⁴ The price tag increased from \$4.5 billion in 2015⁹⁵ to \$6.5 billion in 2022⁹⁶ to \$8.3 billion now.⁹⁷

The completion date slipped from 2032 just two years ago⁹⁸ to 2035 today.⁹⁹

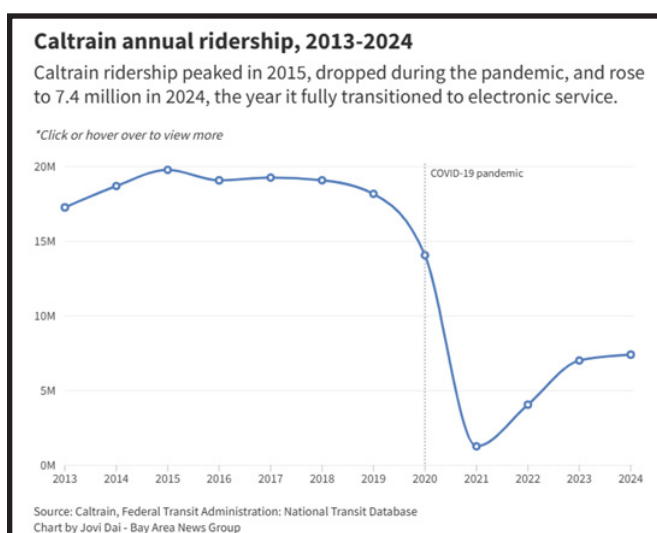
While the costs continue increasing, the number of passengers riding Caltrain dropped 63 percent last year from the peak in 2015.¹⁰⁰

Regardless, former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi says the project is “key” to “saving the planet from the climate crisis.”¹⁰¹

The project itself needs saving from its own fiscal crisis.¹⁰² There is still time for the current administration to re-evaluate the billions of dollars promised by President Biden to bail out this boondoggle.



Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi proudly signs her name on the wall of the pork project she championed that is on track to be one of the most expensive transit projects in the world.¹⁰³



Despite Caltrain ridership plummeting over the past decade ago,¹⁰⁴ San Francisco is planning to spend \$8.3 billion to extend the rail service by a little more than one mile.

Minnesota Light Rail (Minnesota)

A 14.5-mile extension of Minnesota’s light rail service from downtown Minneapolis to the suburbs was originally estimated to cost \$1.25 billion and begin operations by 2018.¹⁰⁵ The price tag has doubled to \$2.74 billion and the opening date is delayed until 2027.¹⁰⁶

The light rail extension is “the costliest public works project in [Minnesota] state history.”¹⁰⁷

Despite its problems getting on track, the FTA committed nearly \$1 billion to the project.¹⁰⁸ While most of the money has been used, \$234 million is still unspent.¹⁰⁹

Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, argues “At a time when our district is dealing with a public health crisis, an economic crisis, and the fallout of George Floyd’s murder at the hands of police, this project will help us get back on our feet.”¹¹⁰

Other local politicians, however, are deriding the project as a “multi-billion dollar boondoggle.”¹¹¹

Some residents are also raising concerns. A section of the new light rail tracks had to be shifted at an added cost of \$141,000 after being put too close to existing freight tracks.¹¹² The problem was identified by a concerned citizen who lives close to the tracks who pointed out, “They have all the equipment, they have all the specialists, they have surveyors – how did they get this wrong?”¹¹³ The added cost included \$7,200 to cover workers’ overtime because the job was scheduled on a Sunday.¹¹⁴

An audit noted the Metropolitan Council, the agency in charge of the project, “Did not have enough funds to finish the project, and it also did not have enough funds to halt the project.”¹¹⁵ This gives a whole new meaning to the term “runaway train.”



Runaway Train: The government agency overseeing Minnesota’s light rail system “did not have enough funds to finish the project, and it also did not have enough funds to halt the project.”¹¹⁶

Boondoggles Are Diverting Billions from Far More Pressing Needs

The DOT report does not address the merits of any of the projects listed in the report.

While a cost/benefit analysis of the boondoggles is not required, this information is essential for deciding whether taxpayer support should continue.

Every dollar sunk into one of these billion-dollar boondoggles is a missed opportunity to support other initiatives that could better serve taxpayers at a fraction of the cost.

The \$10 billion needed to complete the Hawaii rail project, for example, is equivalent to nearly half of the state's entire budget for a full year.¹¹⁷

The director of the Department of Transportation Services admits the rail service, which costs \$6 million a month to run, will never make money.¹¹⁸



A nearly empty passenger car riding on Honolulu's rail line.

While the first phase of the transit system has been open for two years now, fewer than 3,000 riders are using the rail system daily¹¹⁹ in a city with a population of one million people.¹²⁰

That's no surprise since riding the rail is actually slower, sometimes significantly slower, than driving to a destination, even during rush hour. "Commuters face disproportionately longer travel times compared to solo drivers, diminishing Skyline's appeal as a commuting option," according to an analysis conducted by the city's auditor.¹²¹

With few passengers and high costs, it's the taxpayers who are being taken for a ride to keep this train running.

Meanwhile, nearly 5 billion trips across the nation's 623,218 bridges are taken daily by cars, trucks, and other vehicles. About seven percent of these bridges are in poor condition, and in Iowa that number exceeds nineteen percent. The Federal Highway Administration estimates \$69.7 billion is needed to replace some bridges while another \$47.4 billion is necessary for repairs and rehabilitation to others.¹²²



Honolulu's billion dollar rail service is slower than driving, even during rush hour.¹²³



With few passengers being transported by the Honolulu rail service, it's the taxpayers who are being taken for a ride by this costly and largely unused train.¹²⁴

This same argument is being made in Maryland, where billions of dollars are being sunk into another boondoggle on DOT's list.

The National Capital Purple Line, a 16.2-mile rail project in Maryland that was supposed to connect Washington, D.C.'s subway lines in the Maryland suburbs, was over budget and behind schedule before its construction even got started!¹²⁵

Construction costs have doubled from \$2.4 billion to \$5.5 billion, more than \$1 billion of which is being funded by the U.S. DOT.¹²⁶ Meanwhile, the overall price tag to build, operate, and manage the system has ballooned from \$5.6 billion to \$9.3 billion.¹²⁷

As the costs go up, the completion date keeps getting pushed back! The service that was expected to begin in 2022¹²⁸ is now delayed until 2027.¹²⁹

The DOT report explains, "Project delays were incurred early on with a pause on construction progress from a NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] lawsuit and then a dispute arose amongst the contracting team resulting in some of the partners of the public private partnership concessionaire team leaving the team and abandoning the project thus causing additional delays and cost increases."

The rail project literally stopped in its tracks for two years because the companies building it quit.¹³⁰ To get the rail service back on track, a contractor with its own track record of cost overruns and delays was hired to complete the system.¹³¹ The company selected to produce the trains for the Purple Line was responsible for making the D.C. subway system's "least reliable" passenger cars.¹³²

"This is one of the most mismanaged projects ever," admits the county executive where the Purple Line is being built, adding, "This will probably end up being the most expensive light rail project in the world."¹³³

"Maryland's Purple Line leaves taxpayers seeing red," says a former DOT assistant secretary, noting, "There are many better ways for Maryland to spend \$9.3 billion, and many better ways to provide public transportation." She points out, "It costs about \$10 million to build a school and \$6 million to build a police station in Maryland, so Maryland could have an additional 900 schools or 1,500 police stations, or some combination, without the Purple Line. The State spends about \$5.5 billion annually on health. The beneficiaries of the Purple Line are a relatively small number of Marylanders; 28,000 new trips daily in a state with a population of more than 6 million."¹³⁴



Maryland's Purple Line Rail is riding into the red.

Boondoggles Abound: Not All Gravy Trains are Trains

The DOT report provides just a glimpse of the boondoggles being financed with taxpayer dollars.

I inserted a provision into the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 (part of Public Law 117-263) directing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide the Government Accountability Office (GAO) a list of all ongoing water resources development projects to determine how many are \$50 million or more over budget or five years or more behind schedule.¹³⁵ The information was required to be given to GAO within 90 days.

Years later, the Corps still has not turned over the information. As a result, the analysis of overdue projects is now itself years behind schedule.

Earlier this year, Congress passed another law (Section 1244 of Public Law 118-272) directing the Corps to comply with the previous law.¹³⁶ As of July 2025, the information still hasn't been provided.

President Trump signed an executive order directing the Pentagon to complete a comprehensive review of all major defense acquisition programs to identify any that are more than 15 percent behind schedule, 15 percent over cost, unable to meet any key performance parameters, or unaligned with the Secretary of Defense's mission priorities. Any programs found meeting these failing criteria will be considered for cancellation. Furthermore, when this review is completed, the Secretary of Defense will expand this review to the remaining major defense systems.¹³⁷

Other government agencies must conduct their own reviews to identify similar troubled projects.

I know there are more out there. In fact, earlier this year, I released a list of just some of the other billion dollar boondoggles that abound.¹³⁸ Whether it's planes, trains, or automobiles, or anything else for that matter, bureaucrats keep overpaying by billions for projects that keep getting further away from the finish line.

Air Force One Replacements

The cost for two new Air Force One jets increased from \$3.9 billion¹³⁹ to \$5.6 billion¹⁴⁰ as the delivery date for the presidential aircraft has fallen years behind schedule. The planes were expected to land in 2024,¹⁴¹ but arrival is now delayed until 2029.¹⁴² President Trump protected taxpayers from getting stuck with the sky-high cost increases by insisting on a fixed-based contract, meaning the contractor must absorb the overruns.¹⁴³

U.S. Postal Service Next Generation Delivery Vehicles

The Biden administration announced plans in 2022 to spend nearly \$10 billion to purchase tens of thousands of electric delivery vehicles for the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) by 2028.¹⁴⁴

While the initial order for 50,000 trucks was placed three years ago,¹⁴⁵ only 250 trucks have been delivered.¹⁴⁶ When the first vehicles were finally delivered, significant fixes were required before

they were usable.¹⁴⁷ Despite the delays, USPS agreed to pay *higher* prices for the vehicles.¹⁴⁸

A person involved with the production admits, “This is the bottom line: We don’t know how to make a damn truck.”¹⁴⁹ That’s an important detail that should have been discovered before paying the company billions to do just that!¹



*Biden spent billions of dollars buying vehicles for the postal service that won't be delivered on time because the company he hired doesn't "know how to make a damn truck."*¹⁵⁰



Moondoggle: NASA's moon mission is years behind schedule and billions over budget.

NASA's Artemis Moon Missions

The costs of the long-promised return mission to the moon have taken off, but so far, no manned rocket has, making it a moondoggle of astronomical proportions.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has spent more than \$90 billion on the program so far.¹⁵¹ The space launch booster and engine contracts are \$6 billion over budget and years behind schedule¹⁵² as a result of mismanagement by NASA and “poor performance” by contractors.¹⁵³ The Space Launch System alone will cost \$4 billion “per launch and is 140 percent over budget.”¹⁵⁴

Despite the less-than-stellar performance, NASA still paid hundreds of millions of dollars in bonuses to the contractors.¹⁵⁵

The real budget is a blackhole, because “NASA hasn’t established an official cost estimate” for the moon mission.¹⁵⁶

But before even achieving liftoff, President Trump has already announced plans to retire “the grossly expensive and delayed” moon rocket after it completes its scheduled missions.¹⁵⁷

Renovation of the Federal Reserve's Headquarters

The contractors renovating the Federal Reserve Bank must be laughing all the way to the bank. The cost to refurbish the headquarters of the nation's central bank, which is tasked with controlling inflation, ironically increased 34 percent from \$1.9 billion in 2019¹⁵⁸ to nearly \$2.5 billion¹⁵⁹ or as high as \$3.1 billion.¹⁶⁰ Talk about robbing the bank!

The spending is not approved by Congress and is financed with interest earned off the Fed's management of the nation's money supply.¹⁶¹ The Fed seems to be managing the nation's money about as well as its headquarters makeover, with the bank operating at a loss since 2022.¹⁶² It's time to audit the Fed's renovation because this boondoggle is literally breaking the bank.



The Fed's makeover is literally breaking the bank.



President Trump and Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell review the cost overruns of the Fed's headquarters renovation.

Navy and Coast Guard Shipbuilding

Poor planning like this is responsible for sinking a lot of money into boats, as well. Both the Navy and Coast Guard begin building ships before designs are even finished, increasing costs and delaying completion by years. By the time some are completed, they are already outdated.

Designs were still being worked on a year after construction started on the Navy's new frigate, which is three years behind schedule as a result. Despite not being in ship shape condition, the Navy went overboard and issued contracts to build two more of the frigates!

Likewise, the Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutters are five years behind schedule and more than \$2 billion over budget.¹⁶³

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently announced the "partial termination of a wasteful shipbuilding contract" for the Offshore Patrol Cutter, which was years behind schedule. The department added, "The Coast Guard is reviewing contracts which are failing to meet delivery agreements," noting, "We cannot allow critical shipbuilding projects to languish over budget and behind schedule. Our Coast Guard needs modern, capable vessels to safeguard our national and economic security, and we will ensure every dollar is spent wisely to achieve that mission. This action redirects resources to where they are most needed, ensuring the Coast Guard remains the finest, most-capable maritime service in the world."¹⁶⁴

DOD Information Technology

"DOD efforts to buy and maintain IT systems are billions over budget and delayed," according to GAO. Most of the 24 systems reported cost or scheduling changes over the past two years. Half experienced cost increases. The cost for the Maintenance Repair and Overhaul System has increased \$815.5 million since January 2023.¹⁶⁵

The delays in modernizing DOD's financial management systems are making it extremely difficult to audit the Pentagon, which is the only major federal agency to not achieve a "clean" audit.¹⁶⁶

GAO notes, "Delays and spending also have broader impacts than auditing DOD's finances. They can jeopardize DOD's national security and defense missions, as well as put service members and their families' data at risk of being stolen."¹⁶⁷

As GAO's warning highlights, there are real-world consequences to bureaucratic boondoggles beyond wasting taxpayer dollars.

Modernization of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Electronic Health Records System

The cost of modernizing the Department of Veterans Affairs' electronic health records system dramatically increased from \$16 billion to as much as \$50 billion.¹⁶⁸ Yet, the price isn't even the most scandalous part of this project. Flaws with the new system may have contributed to the deaths of several veterans¹⁶⁹ and caused harm to others.¹⁷⁰

The costs and consequences of mismanaging taxpayer dollars cannot be fully measured with spreadsheets.

Recommendations for Bringing Boondoggles to a Squealing Halt

I appreciate Transportation Secretary Duffy for finally making the first “billion dollar boondoggle report” available. Simply having a list of troubled projects allows us to begin the process of holding each accountable.

In future installments, which are required annually by the law I authored, DOT needs to dig deeper to give taxpayers a more thorough overview of the problems causing delays and cost overruns.

The leadership Secretary Duffy demonstrated by thoroughly investigating the California High Speed Rail and then canceling its federal funding for failure to meet its own deadlines and cost projections should be the new gold standard in accountability. This action saved taxpayers \$4.3 billion.¹⁷¹

The DOT boondoggle report provides a road map for continuing these efforts.

Collectively, DOT is spending more than \$4.5 billion on these four other boondoggles listed in the report:

Project	U.S. Department of Transportation Dollars
Honolulu Rail Transit	\$1,941,400,000
Maryland Purple Line Transit	\$1,006,000,000
Transbay Corridor Core Capacity	\$1,335,730,000
Queens Railroad Project	\$294,781,579

Three other projects DOT has committed \$9.4 billion towards are missing from the report:

Project	U.S. Department of Transportation Dollars
Subway to Silicon Valley	\$5,098,242,571
San Francisco Transit Center	\$3,380,000,000
Minnesota Light Rail	\$938,690,000

That’s almost \$14 billion being sunk into just seven bottomless boondoggles.

If these projects can’t be salvaged with better management, they should be canceled. The billions of dollars saved can be put towards higher priority transportation needs or used to pay off our \$37 trillion national debt.

It’s no coincidence so many money pits listed in this report are located in California where boondoggles are unabashedly built by design.

The former Speaker of the State Assembly and Mayor of San Francisco, Willie Brown, confesses, “In the world of civic projects, the first budget is really just a down payment. If people knew the real cost from the start, nothing would ever be approved. The idea is to get going. Start digging a hole and make it so big, there’s no alternative to coming up with the money to fill it in. Brown admits, “We always knew the initial estimate was way under the real cost.”¹⁷²

Taxpayers in the rest of the country shouldn't be forced to bail out Golden State gravy trains because bureaucrats in Washington are so easily bamboozled by California's boondoggle budgeteering.

The same levels of transparency and accountability given to the California High-Speed Rail by DOT must be applied to other projects across the government.

We do see this beginning to happen. President Trump issued an executive order to scrutinize Pentagon programs¹⁷³ and personally questioned the Chair of the Federal Reserve about the costs and magnitude of the Federal Reserve's headquarters renovation.¹⁷⁴ The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also announced Coast Guard contracts "failing to meet delivery agreements" are being reviewed.¹⁷⁵

But as we see with the late and incomplete report thrown together by DOT and the dilly dallying to avoid disclosing projects for review by Army Corps of Engineers, bureaucrats are resisting legal mandates to provide transparency. Compliance with the law is not optional.

Going millions or billions of dollars over budget and falling five years or more behind schedule should never be accepted as standard business practices, much less subsidized with blank checks from taxpayers.

Megaprojects need more scrutiny before receiving taxpayer dollars to ensure proposed budgets are believable and plans are completed and properly designed.

Likewise, when milestones are missed, deadlines are delayed, or costs increase, immediate action must be taken to get a runaway train back on track or canceled altogether before the train leaves the station.

Based upon years of investigations and ongoing oversight, I recommend the following actions be taken immediately:

- Congress must pass my bipartisan Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act requiring an annual public report disclosing every taxpayer-funded project that is \$1 billion or more over budget or five years or more behind schedule.
- Congress should also pass my Bogus Bonus Ban Act prohibiting government agencies from paying bonuses or awards to contractors for projects that are over budget or behind schedule.
- The annual appropriations bills that provide funding for government programs and activities should require agencies to alert Congress to any significant cost increases. This early intervention empowers lawmakers to take actions to prevent billion dollar boondoggles.
- The executive branch shouldn't wait for Congress to act. Every department and agency head should review ongoing projects to identify delays and cost overruns and take action to correct or cancel problematic projects.
- DOT or the department's Office of Inspector General should conduct thorough, thoughtful, independent investigations of the other projects listed in this initial report.
- For future installments of the DOT boondoggle report, the Department should provide a deeper glimpse of the problems and ensure the list is complete.
- Congress should hold public hearings on the findings of the boondoggle reports.
- Congress and the President should cancel funding to mismanaged projects that are significantly over budget and failing to meet deadlines that cannot be justified or corrected.

Appendix

Washington Math: The Billion Dollar Cost Overruns

Project	Department	Original Cost	Current Cost Estimate	Amount Over Budget
California High-Speed Rail	Transportation	\$33 billion	\$128 billion	\$95 billion
Electronic Health Record System	Veterans Affairs	\$16.1 billion	\$49.8 billion	\$33.7 billion
Bay Area Rail Transit Extension	Transportation	\$4.7 billion	\$12.8 billion	\$8.1 billion
Moon Mission Rocket Boosters	NASA	\$7 billion	\$13.1 billion	\$6.1 billion
Honolulu Rail Transit	Transportation	\$5.1 billion	\$9.9 billion	\$4.5 billion
Caltrain Extension	Transportation	\$4.5 billion	\$8.3 billion	\$3.8 billion
Maryland Purple Line Transit	Transportation	\$2.4 billion	\$5.5 billion	\$3.1 billion
Polar Security Cutters	Homeland Security	\$3.1 billion	\$5.1 billion	\$2 billion
Air Force One Replacements	Defense	\$3.9 billion	\$5.6 billion	\$1.7 billion
Minneapolis Light Rail Extension	Transportation	\$1.3 billion	\$2.7 billion	\$1.4 billion
Transbay Corridor Core Capacity	Transportation	\$2.7 billion	\$4 billion	\$1.3 billion
Federal Reserve's Headquarters	Federal Reserve	\$1.9 billion	\$3.1 billion	\$1.2 billion
Queens Railroad Project	Transportation	\$400 million	\$1.4 billion	\$1 billion



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20590

June 3, 2025

The Honorable JD Vance
President of the Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. President:

Enclosed is the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) report to Congress addressing requirements in Section 11319 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Public Law No. 117-58, which requires the Secretary to provide information on a project or activity carried out with funds provided by DOT, including a project carried out under title 23 or 49, United States Code —

- (1) that is more than 5 years behind schedule; or
- (2) for which the total amount spent on the project or activity is not less than \$1,000,000,000 more than the original cost estimate for the project or activity.

The information for this report was drawn from various sources utilized by the modal administrations of DOT, reporting on current open projects funded from IIJA and from prior resources. The report provides details on these projects, per the legislative requirement, including explanation for delay in completion or increase in the original cost estimate for the covered project, including, where applicable, any impact of insufficient or delayed appropriations.

A similar letter has been sent to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S.P. Duffy", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Sean P. Duffy

Enclosure

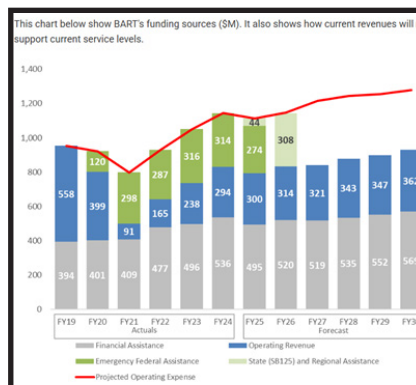
DOT Annual Report of Covered Projects

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)	(N)	(O)	(P)	(Q)	(R)	(S)	(T)	(U)
Operating Administration	Project Name	Purpose of the Project	Project Location(s)	Contract / Award Number	Year Project was Initiated	Federal Share of Total Cost:	Primary Contractor	Subcontractor	Grant Recipient	Subgrantee Recipient	Explanation of any change to the original scope of the project, including by the addition or narrowing of the initial requirements	Original Expected Date for Completion of Project	Current Expected Date for Completion of Project	Original cost estimate, as adjusted to reflect increases in the CPI-U (whole dollars)	Current cost estimate, as adjusted to reflect increases in the CPI-U (whole dollars)	Explanation for a delay in completion or an increase in the original cost estimate for the covered project, including, where applicable, any impact of insufficient or delayed appropriations	Amount of and rationale for any award, incentive fee, or other type of bonus, if awarded			
Federal Aviation Administration	Sidney Municipal	Construct taxiway	NY	3-36-0109-019-2016	2016	\$ 1,149,000			N23	N/A		12/12/2020	12/31/2024	\$ 1,276,667	\$ 1,276,667	Project is complete. Grant has remained open due to an ongoing investigation by the NYS Department of Labor against the General Contractor (GC); investigation has wrapped up and the grant is expected to close this calendar year.	N/A			
Federal Aviation Administration	Calico Rock-Izard County	Construct taxiway	AR	3-05-0085-010-2014	2014	\$ 350,366			377	N/A		9/22/2018	12/31/2024	\$ 389,296	\$ 389,296	Project is complete. Sponsor has been involved in litigation that should be wrapping up this calendar year.	N/A			
Federal Aviation Administration	Jones Memorial	Conduct environmental study	OK	3-40-0128-009-2015	2015	\$ 175,626			377	N/A		9/11/2019	12/31/2024	\$ 195,140	\$ 195,140	Sponsor has had issues with the study and it is still being worked, but should be closed this calendar year.	N/A			
Federal Aviation Administration	Lafayette Regional	Improve runway safety area	LA	3-22-0025-044-2012	2012	\$ 5,831,000			LFT	N/A		9/25/2016	12/31/2024	\$ 6,478,889	\$ 6,478,889	Project is complete. Sponsor has been involved in litigation that should be wrapping up this calendar year.	N/A			
Federal Aviation Administration	Lafayette Regional	Modify Service Road; Update Airport Master Plan Study; Rehabilitate Taxiway; Improve Runway Safety Area	LA	3-22-0025-045-2014	2014	\$ 5,361,387			LFT	N/A		9/23/2018	12/31/2024	\$ 5,957,097	\$ 5,957,097	Project is complete. Sponsor has been involved in litigation that should be wrapping up this calendar year.	N/A			
Federal Highway Administration	I-170/I-71 Columbus Crossroads	The corridor improvement will reduce the number of entrance/exit ramps from thirteen on this 1.5-mile stretch of highway, while introducing new collector-distributor urban avenues into and out of the Downtown area. The finished project will help reconnect neighborhoods to Downtown, promote economic development opportunities along the corridor and within surrounding neighborhoods, and provide a safer transportation environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.	Various		2011	\$ 1,170,000,000	Various: Kokosing Construction Company Inc.	Various	Ohio DOT	City of Columbus	Addition of Phase 6 to the overall project. This phase was originally considered to be "operationally independent" and was to be a separate project from the first five phases. Phase 6 addresses Outbound ramps from Downtown Columbus to I-70/I-71, the ramp from SR 315 SB to I-70, and improvements on I-70 west of I-71.	10/1/2018	11/1/2021	\$ 801,700,000	\$ 1,634,800,000	Additional phasing, maintenance of contract size. Changes in scope and/or approach to phasing, material costs, supply chain issues and market conditions. Utility delays impacted construction of retaining walls on the recent Phase 6R/6B.				
Federal Highway Administration	2- Council Bluffs Interstate Improvement Systems	To address capacity needs, improve safety, and correct functional design issues associated with I-80, and I-29 in the Council Bluffs/Dubuque metropolitan area. The interstate corridor in Council Bluffs is unique in that I-29 and I-80 come from the SE and merge into a joint roadway that goes for 3 miles through the city until they split out again at the Missouri River. The CBS project had a goal of making this merge of two large interstates much more efficient in both design and travel.	Council Bluffs, IA. Specifically from the western part of Council Bluffs, from the city limits on the east end to the Missouri river on the west end.	Various- 2008 and 2011	2007/2008	\$ 796,000,000	Various	Various	Iowa DOT		In 2013 and 2014 there were large scale changes to the planned corridor project. Once the ultimate build was determined/accepted, the cost increased due to consultant engineering services through a GSE/PM contract. Construction cost increased as NEPA, ROW, and Final Design were complete, and new projects were included in this ultimate build (Hebraska Avenue interchange, Madison Avenue interchange, and the UPRR railroad bridge reconstruction). Since then the scope has remained consistent and steady.	12/1/2018	12/1/2026	\$ 763,000,000	\$ 1,364,000,000	There was not necessarily a delay, but rather a purposeful increase in scope to add construction projects like the Hebraska Avenue interchange, Madison Avenue interchange, and the UPRR railroad bridge. Due to the long term corridor wide projection of improvement needs, this additional work added time to the overall completion of the CBS project. Other less impactful delays were the States adjustments in program funding through out the years, and the gap in Federal funding from the FAST Act to the Bill.				
Federal Highway Administration	I-1-295 & 42/1-76 Direct Connection Project	The I-295 Direct Connection Project in Camden County, New Jersey designed to alleviate severe congestion and safety concerns at the existing interchange by creating a direct connection on I-295 and implementing significant highway improvements.	Bellmawr, NJ, Ephraim, and Gloucester City in Camden County	Various - 2013, 2014, and 2017	2013	\$ 1,157,600,000	Various	Various	NIJOT		N/A	11/30/2021	7/1/2032	\$ 873,000,000	\$ 1,274,000,000	Factors that contributed to the delay include advanced ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) installations delays, incorporation of current ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards, settlement issues at retaining walls, utility relocation delays, pile installation problems at bridge No. 3-7 wall No. 12, and construction of the temporary Browning Road bridge.				
Federal Transit Administration	Honolulu Rail Transit Project	The original project is a 20-mile rail line that would serve the south shore of Oahu from a western terminus in Kapolei, past Pearl Harbor and Honolulu International Airport, through Downtown Honolulu, an eastern terminus at Ala Moana Center. The project scope includes 21 stations, 80 light metro rail vehicles, four park and ride facilities with 4,100 spaces, and a maintenance and storage facility	Honolulu, HI	HI-03-0047-02	2012	\$ 1,941,400,000	FTA awards a grant to the recipient and is not involved in awarding contracts to the recipient's contractor and/or subcontractors	FTA awards a grant to the recipient and is not involved in awarding contracts to the recipient's contractor and/or subcontractors	City and County of Honolulu; Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART)		Due to cost increases, the original 20-mile project scope was truncated by 1.25 miles and the last two stations were also eliminated.	1/31/2020	3/31/2021	\$ 5,122,000,000	\$ 9,933,000,000	Project schedule has been extended by 11 years and 2 months, and project budget has increased by more than \$4.8 billion to a current cost estimate of \$9.9 billion (with the removal of the 2 stations and 1.25 miles that were in the original scope). Multiple unsuccessful attempts to award a construction contract for the Center City Segment has delayed the project and increased the cost. Utility relocation complications and delays also impacted the project schedule and cost.				
Federal Transit Administration	Maryland Purple Line LRT	The project is a 16.2 mile east-west Light Rail Transit (LRT) line extending inside the Washington, DC Beltway from Bethesda in Montgomery County, MD to New Carrollton in Prince George's County, MD. The project will also connect to all three Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) commuter rail lines, Amtrak, and local bus routes. The project includes 21 stations, two storage and maintenance facilities, and 25 light rail vehicles (LRVs).	Bethesda, Maryland	MD-2016-005-00	2017	\$ 1,006,000,000	FTA awards a grant to the recipient and is not involved in awarding contracts to the recipient's contractor and/or subcontractors	FTA awards a grant to the recipient and is not involved in awarding contracts to the recipient's contractor and/or subcontractors	Maryland MTA		N/A	12/31/2022	2/24/2028	\$ 2,407,000,000	\$ 5,522,000,000	Project schedule has been extended by 5 years and 7 months, and project budget has increased by more than \$1.1 billion to a current cost estimate of \$5.5 billion. Project delays were incurred early on with a pause on construction progress from a NEPA lawsuit and then a dispute arose among the contracting team resulting in some of the partners of the public private partnership concessionaire team leaving the team and abandoning the project thus causing additional delays and cost increases.				
Federal Transit Administration	Transbay Corridor Core Capacity Project	The TCCCP is a Core Capacity Improvement Project that will reduce crowding and allow for continued ridership growth by increasing the peak hours throughput from 25 variable-length trains to 28 ten-car heavy rail trains per hour in the part of the existing system where four of the four rail lines merge into a double-track alignment through the Transbay Tube	Oakland, CA	CA-2020-047-00	2020	\$ 1,335,730,000	FTA awards a grant to the recipient and is not involved in awarding contracts to the recipient's contractor and/or subcontractors	FTA awards a grant to the recipient and is not involved in awarding contracts to the recipient's contractor and/or subcontractors	BAV AREA RAPID TRANSIT (BART)		N/A	1/15/2030	8/15/2033	\$ 1,705,700,000	\$ 4,017,600,000	Project schedule has been extended by 3 years and 7 months, and project budget has increased by more than \$1.3 billion to a current cost estimate of \$4 billion. Higher prices and supply chain challenges impacted the contract BART had awarded in 2021 for the storage yard and the contract was terminated. Redesign efforts are still underway. The redesign and re-procurement needed for the storage yard has delayed the overall project.				
Federal Railroad Administration	California High-Speed Train Program: OAKA Grant	Engineering and environmental analysis for the early phases of the California High-Speed Train System, as well as station area planning, and construction of the initial Central Valley section.	Madera County to Bakersfield (Kern County), CA. Construction and delivery of the initial Central Valley section of the California High-Speed Train system. Additionally, the project will fund the Phase 1 environmental clearance of the California High-Speed Train Program (CHSTP) between San Francisco and Anaheim.	FR-HSR-0009	2010	\$ 2,552,556,231	N/A	N/A	California High-Speed Rail Authority		Project was initially obligated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for environmental and preliminary engineering activities for Phase 1 of the California High-Speed Rail Train Program, and was subsequently amended to add the funding selected to complete project development and delivery of the 119-mile First Construction Section in California's Central Valley.	9/30/2017	12/31/2029	\$ 9,058,327,462	\$ 18,048,788,592	Project schedule has been extended by 11 years and 3 months. The project completion date is now 12/31/2029 and total cost estimate is \$18 billion for the First Construction Section (development and construction efforts). The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) has experienced various schedule delays and cost increases over the years. The project has experienced delays in acquiring right-of-way, completing environmental clearances, utility agreements, and advancing construction. Exacerbating this was the 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic which slowed construction progress as well as delays in the court system and public comment periods. These schedule delays have contributed significantly to cost increases. Also, procuring design build contracts in advance of right-of-way acquisition has resulted in design changes and cost increases. More recently, inflation has impacted project costs. CHSRA awarded all three civil works construction contracts for the First Construction Section, and CHSRA continues to accelerate its acquisition of the properties necessary for construction of the First Construction Section.				
Federal Railroad Administration	California High-Speed Train Program: Initial Central Valley Section (Madera County to Bakersfield)	Construction and delivery of the initial Central Valley section of the California High-Speed Train system.	Madera County to Bakersfield (Kern County), CA. Construction and delivery of the initial Central Valley section of the California High-Speed Train system.	FR-HSR-0118	2011	\$ 928,620,000	N/A	N/A	California High-Speed Rail Authority		This grant is to complete final design and construction of the 119-mile First Construction Section in California's Central Valley.	12/31/2018	1/31/2030	\$ 1,288,425,000	\$ 18,048,788,592	Project schedule has been extended by 11 years. The total cost estimate is \$18 billion (for development and construction of the First Construction Section). The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) has experienced various schedule delays and cost increases over the years. The project has experienced delays in acquiring right-of-way, completing environmental clearances, utility agreements, and advancing construction. Exacerbating this was the 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic which slowed construction progress as well as delays in the court system and public comment periods. These schedule delays have contributed significantly to cost increases. Also, procuring design build contracts in advance of right-of-way acquisition has resulted in design changes and cost increases. More recently, inflation has impacted project costs. CHSRA awarded all three civil works construction contracts for the First Construction Section, and CHSRA continues to accelerate its acquisition of the properties necessary for construction of the First Construction Section.				
Federal Railroad Administration	Chicago-St. Louis Corridor Improvement Program	Construction and delivery of upgraded passenger rail service between Chicago, IL and St. Louis, MO, including major improvements to track, signal systems, stations, and rolling stock to increase performance, passenger comfort, and safety.	Chicago, IL to St. Louis, MO	FR-HSR-0015	2010	\$ 1,137,623,694	N/A	N/A	Illinois Department of Transportation		The overall project scope has remained consistent, but rolling stock procurements have changed from bi-level cars to single-level cars.	12/31/2015	12/31/2026	\$ 1,202,446,317	\$ 1,284,219,898	Project schedule has been extended by 11 years and project cost estimate increased by approximately \$82 million. The time extension is related to equipment procurement issues. This cost increase is also related to the equipment procurement and is covered by 100% cost funds. The project is now expected to be completed by 12/31/2026. Project delay is related to the partner seeking to procure single-level passenger rail cars in lieu of bi-level rail cars. Caltrans and IDOT (granted) entered a joint procurement to procure 130 bi-level passenger cars in 2012. After multiple years of delay and the withdrawal of the original car builder from the procurement contract, Caltrans and IDOT amended the procurement contract to procure single-level passenger rail cars from an alternate car builder in 2017. The respective grant agreements were amended to extend the Period of Performance based on the revised procurement contract and schedule.				
Federal Railroad Administration	Harold Interlocking - Northeast Corridor Congestion Relief Project	Construction of a conflict-free, grade-separated route through the heavily congested Harold interlocking (railroad junction in Queens, New York, streamlining passenger rail traffic into New York City from along the Northeast Corridor).	The areas of the proposed service improvements are Harold interlocking is a critical link on the NEC between Boston and New York, and is located in Queens, NY approximately 3.7 miles east of Pennysylvania Station New York (PNY). Work outlined in this cooperative agreement will occur between MP 2.5 and 4.4. (MP 0 is at PNY).	FR-HSR-0065	2011	\$ 294,781,579	N/A	N/A	New York State Department of Transportation		Scope change requested and approved in 2023 to adjust for delays in entering force account agreements and completion of loop track construction elements.	7/31/2017	12/31/2027	\$ 368,476,974	\$ 1,367,238,987	Project schedule has been extended by 9 years and 7 months, and project budget has increase by approximately \$1.1 billion to a current cost estimate of \$1.4 billion. Estimated completion is now 12/31/2027. Project increases are a result of interrelationships with other critical infrastructure projects underway in NY area that limit track outages and force account availability.				

Note: CPI-U is the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Works Cited

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- ² U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) report to Congress addressing requirements in Section 11319 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law No. 117-58), June 3, 2025.
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