

All Aboard the Boondoggle Express! **Government Gravy Trains Going Off the Rails**

Here are some government gravy trains taking taxpayers for a ride, but never leaving the station.

The Bay Area Subway Extension. A [6.5-mile subway extension](#) in the San Francisco Bay Area was expected to cost about [\\$4.7 billion](#) as of 2018. The price is now nearly [\\$12.8 billion](#), or almost \$2 billion per mile! The [2026 completion date](#) has also been delayed until [May 2037](#). Despite going off the rails, the Biden Administration committed [\\$5 billion](#) to the project last year.

California's High-Speed Rail. The cost of California's 800-mile high-speed rail project tripled from [\\$33 billion](#) in 2008 to as much as [\\$128 billion](#) today. The completion date has been delayed from [2020](#) to [2033](#), and even that is looking "[increasingly unlikely](#)." It's been a [decade since the railroad's groundbreaking](#) and construction is costing about [\\$1.8 million a day](#), yet no [tracks have even been laid](#). By comparison, it took just [six years](#) to complete the Transcontinental Railroad. More than [\\$4 billion](#) remains unspent of the [\\$6.8 billion](#) Washington provided to the project, but applications are pending for [another \\$216.6 million](#). Former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is a [longtime champion of the train](#). President Trump previously [canceled](#) federal funding for the project, but President Biden [restored the money](#).

Downtown San Francisco Rail Extension. Costing more than \$6 billion per mile, an [1.3-mile extension](#) of San Francisco's Caltrain rail service is on track to be [one of the most expensive transit projects in the world](#). The price tag increased from [\\$6 billion in 2018](#) to [\\$8.25 billion](#) today. The completion date has also been delayed, from [2027](#) to [2032](#). Despite going off the rails, the Biden Administration pledged [\\$3.4 billion for the project](#).

Maryland Light Rail. The National Capital Purple Line, a 16.2-mile rail project in Maryland, is five years behind schedule and more than \$8 billion over budget. The service, originally expected to begin in [spring 2022](#), is now delayed until [winter 2027](#). The construction costs alone [nearly doubled](#) from its initial [\\$2 billion](#) budget. The overall price tag to build, operate, and manage the system is also on track to double. The original cost was [\\$5.6 billion](#), but is now closer to [\\$10 billion](#). The federal financial commitment has grown, too. The project is riding on [\\$936 million](#) provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Minnesota Light Rail. 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](#). That date slipped to [2023](#). Two years later, the train still has not left the station, but might open in [2027](#). A [2022 audit](#) found the project running nine years behind schedule and approximately \$1.5 billion over budget. Despite the problems getting on track, Washington committed to paying [\\$1 billion](#) to support the project. Derided by some local politicians as a "[multi-billion dollar boondoggle](#)," the light rail extension is "[the costliest public works project in \[Minnesota\] state history](#)." In a [statement](#) only a bureaucrat could appreciate, an audit noted the Metropolitan Council, 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](#)."