



BARACK OBAMA: STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

BARACK OBAMA: INVESTING IN 21ST-CENTURY TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Strengthen Core Infrastructure: As our society becomes more mobile and interconnected, the need for 21st-century transportation networks has never been greater. However, too many of our nation's railways, highways, bridges, airports, and neighborhood streets are slowly decaying due to lack of investment and strategic long-term planning. Barack Obama believes that America's long-term competitiveness depends on the stability of our critical infrastructure. As president, Obama will make strengthening our transportation systems, including our roads and bridges, a top priority.

Support Amtrak Funding: Barack Obama has been a strong supporter of federal financial support for Amtrak. Obama believes we need to reform Amtrak to improve accountability. In many parts of the country, Amtrak is the only form of reliable transportation. In the U.S. Senate, Obama is a cosponsor of the Passenger Rail Investment and Innovation Act of 2007, a leading act to provide long-term federal investment to Amtrak. As president, Barack Obama will continue to fight for Amtrak funding and reform so that individuals, families and businesses throughout the country have safe and reliable transportation options.

Support Development of High-Speed Freight and Passenger Rail: Barack Obama supports development of high-speed rail networks across the country. Providing passengers with safe high-speed rail will have significant environmental and metropolitan planning advantages and help diversify our nation's transportation infrastructure. Our domestic rail freight capacity must also be strengthened because our demand for rail transportation has never been greater, leaving many key transportation hubs stretched to capacity. Obama is committed to renewing the federal government's commitment to high speed rail so that our nation's transportation infrastructure continues to support, and not hinder, our nation's long-term economic growth.

Strengthen Metropolitan Planning to Cut Down Traffic Congestion: Barack Obama believes we must take steps at the front-end as well as the back-end of the planning process to cut down traffic congestion in our large and medium-size cities. Obama supported a measure authored by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) to mandate states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations create policies that incentivize greater bicycle and pedestrian usage of sidewalks and roads. As president, Obama will work to provide states and local governments with the resources they need to address sprawl and create more livable communities.

Strengthen Air Transportation in Underserved Areas: Obama has worked across party lines to protect funding for the Essential Air Service program, which provides vital funds for air transportation in rural areas. Obama supports the continuation of the Small Community Air Service Development Program that helps small and mid-sized communities attract new air service, which is critical to local economic development. Obama will work to improve the effectiveness of these programs and increase the availability of rail transportation options for residents of rural communities.

Modernize Infrastructure on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers: Obama strongly supported the Water Resources and Development Act, which will provide funding for modernizing the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers' system of locks and dams. The bill will also provide funding for environmental restoration along the upper Mississippi. The decay of existing locks and dams has led to stagnating economic development for areas along the river, including Iowa, because of the decreasing ability of farmers and other producers to ship their goods both domestically and internationally. Obama's work to pass the Water Resources and Development Act has been praised by the National Corn Grower's Association and the American Soybean Association. As president, Obama will continue to ensure that the federal government invests in upgrading our national transportation infrastructure for agricultural and commercial goods.

Improve Transportation Access to Jobs: Three-quarters of welfare recipients live in areas that are poorly served by public transportation and low-income workers spend up to 36 percent of their incomes on transportation. Barack Obama has spent years working to improve transportation access for low-income Americans. As an Illinois state senator, he was the chief sponsor of the bill that created the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation, a body that was charged with building public-private partnerships to help connect low-income Americans with jobs. As president, Obama will work to eliminate transportation disparities so that all Americans can lead meaningful and productive lives. Obama will double the federal Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program to ensure that additional federal public transportation dollars flow to the highest-need communities and that urban planning initiatives take this aspect of transportation policy into account. JARC funds have been used to connect low-income workers around the country with job opportunities.

Improve and Modernize Air Traffic Control: Because of an outdated air-traffic control system and overscheduling at airports already operating at full capacity, there were a record number of flight delays during the first half of 2007. Moreover, the Federal Aviation Administration has failed to work well with our nation's air traffic controllers, neglecting to treat them with the respect they deserve. There are nearly 1,100 fewer air traffic controllers working in U.S. air traffic facilities today than three years ago, despite increasing air traffic. Obama will work with Congress to modernize the nation's air traffic control system and he will direct the new FAA Administrator to work cooperatively with the frontline air traffic controllers to restore morale and improve working conditions and operations at the agency.

SAFEGUARD TRANSPORTATION FROM TERRORISM

Protect Transportation Infrastructure from Terrorism: The federal government's National Asset Database, which is intended to guide homeland security priorities, lists 77,069 potential U.S. targets including petting zoos and popcorn factories. Experts say this database is not useful for homeland security planning. Barack Obama's Department of Homeland Security will develop a meaningful critical infrastructure protection plan across the nation and will work with the private sector to ensure that all high-risk targets are prepared for disasters both natural and man-made.

Bolster Airport Security: Between October 2005 and January 2006, Government Accountability Office investigators were able to smuggle bomb components past federal screeners at all 21 airports they targeted. And airline passengers are still not screened against a comprehensive, accurate terrorist watch list. As a result, almost six years after 9/11, we still have a security system that results in eight-year olds and grandmothers being repeatedly questioned and even stopped from flying. Developing a comprehensive, accurate list must be a priority and used in a way that safeguards passengers' privacy while ensuring the safety of air travel. As a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, Barack Obama believes we must redouble our efforts to determine if the measures implemented after 9/11 are adequately addressing the threats our nation continues to face from airplane-based terrorism. Obama has supported increased numbers of federal airport screeners and improved funding for aviation security.

Safeguard Mass Public Transportation: Every weekday, Americans take 34 million trips on public transportation systems to get to work, school and beyond. Even though recent attacks have happened on public transit in Madrid, Mumbai and London, the Bush administration has invested only a small fraction of the \$6 billion that transportation officials have said is necessary to implement needed security improvements. Barack Obama believes that this critical hole in our homeland security network must be addressed. He will fight for greater information-sharing between national intelligence agents and local officials and provide local law enforcement agencies with the everyday tools they need to protect their transportation systems. As a U.S. Senator representing Chicago, Illinois, one of the nation's major rail transportation hubs, Obama has consistently advocated stronger rail and transit security programs.