

TEF NEWS RELEASE

TAXPAYER EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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TAXPAYER EDUCATION FOUNDATION TO EXAMINE BIDEN “INFRASTRUCTURE” BOONDOGGLE

Joe Biden and his Democrat hit-men in Congress are readying a \$1.2 trillion companion bill to their \$3.5 trillion “healthcare and antipoverty” proposal. Six-hundred billion of the \$1.2 trillion reportedly will be spent on “infrastructure.”

The term infrastructure covers many sins, and the Taxpayer Education Foundation (TEF) will look at the bill’s proposed spending and present research on the value (or lack thereof) of some of its projects.

Randal O’Toole, senior fellow with the Cato Institute specializing in transportation and land use policy, notes that Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg’s proposal to make the United States a “world leader” in high-speed rail would add more than \$4 trillion to the federal debt for construction of new rail lines plus tens of billions of dollars of annual deficit spending to subsidize operating costs. In exchange, such a high-speed rail network is likely to carry less than 2 percent of the nation’s passenger travel and no freight.

“High-speed trains were rendered obsolete in 1958,” writes O’Toole, “six years before Japan opened its first bullet train, when Boeing’s 707 entered commercial service; the airliner could cruise at more than twice the top speeds of the fastest scheduled high-speed trains today.”

While air travel cost more than rail travel in 1964, the cost today is less than a fifth of the average fares paid by riders of the Amtrak Acela, the only high-speed train operating in the United States.

According to O’Toole, the main disadvantage of high-speed trains, other than their slow speeds compared with air travel, is that they require a huge amount of infrastructure that must be built and maintained to extremely precise standards. The United States is struggling to maintain the infrastructure it already has. “It makes no sense to build more infrastructure that the nation won’t be able to afford to maintain.”

“TEF will continue to research this topic,” said Jim Tobin, economist and TEF president, “and I can tell you that much of the spending proposed in this infrastructure package is excessive, unwarranted and just plain stupid. Billions of taxpayer dollars are at stake, and we will do our best to expose the egregious ‘infrastructure’ spending proposals coming out of the Biden administration.”

Source: Cato Institute Policy Analysis, April 20, 2021 | Number 915
The High-Speed Rail Money Sink By Randal O’Toole