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Public Transportation

Large-scale public transportation systems in our country make a lot of sense in many cases. These systems should be encouraged by the federal government and supported through interstate planning and environmental impact studies. Regional systems should be built and paid for by the state and local governments where the systems will be implemented. For larger systems that span the country or multiple states, federal assistance would be appropriate, but the invested government funds should eventually be paid back through the fees the system owners charge those using the facilities. In this way the state and federal governments can help finance worthy investments in our nation's infrastructure, but still be paid back in the long run by those benefiting from them. The increased efficiency and lower pollution emissions associated with these systems make them beneficial to the public at large and will help to pay off the systems in the long run.

It is a shame and a great loss to the nation that we removed most of the railroad tracks and then sold the ties, steel rails and property it resided on. It was very short sighted to think of the rail system as an outdated mode of transportation. It is so much more efficient to have a couple of diesel locomotives pulling a hundred cars full of freight. Analysis shows it is much cheaper to move a ton of freight on the railways than to put it on a truck and move it down the road. Rolling friction of steel wheels on a steel rail is much lower than the friction associated with over the road vehicles. Since trains don't have to stop as much, you keep the momentum rolling and conserve a lot of kinetic energy. Modern locomotives are also more efficient than ever with emission friendly diesel engines and electric drive systems that reabsorb rolling energy when stopping.

Trucking companies only got a hold on the freight shipping business in this country because they were never charged adequate tax registration fees to reflect the impact and cost of them driving on the roads. Big trucks are constantly having their weight limits raised, which is causing considerable damage to our roadways. This has caused a nearly constant state of construction on our highway system as well as the millions of hours wasted by us all waiting in the construction traffic. The highway system is an expensive and strategic infrastructure that we should not be allowing trucking traffic to destroy. Since the heavily loaded trucks are destroying the roads prematurely, a lot of the cost of the nation's highway systems should be borne by the trucking industry. If these costs would have been factored in originally, the trucking industry never would have grown like it has and we would still be using the railways.

I am a big supporter of public transportation in large cities and metropolitan areas. The existing subway systems and light rail tracks in heavily populated areas of the country and between adjacent population centers are efficient and heavily utilized. More systems of these types should be built using the newest technology available to further increase efficiency and lower the pollution impact. Older systems should also be updated as they wear out to the newest technology. I think there should be government help in planning and upgrading these systems, but the regions where they are built and the people that use them should ultimately bear the cost. When deployed and upgraded these public transportation systems will be cheaper in the long run and better for the environment.

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