

# The Washington Post

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## Why high-speed rail would not be a drag

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The financial uncertainties facing California's high-speed rail project should not be read as an indictment of such rail development in America [\[front page, Jan. 16\]](#).

High-speed, inter-city passenger rail can be successful, even profitable — as proven in France. SNCF, the French national passenger rail system, wrote a check for 230 million euros (\$299 million) to the national government just before Christmas and has returned 600 million euros (\$780 million) to the government over the past five years.

Congestion is choking our metropolitan areas, costing Americans \$110 billion a year in lost productivity and wasted fuel. We must invest in a passenger rail alternative. The longer we wait, the less livable our cities will become and the more expensive the alternatives will be. The French have proven that the concept can succeed. We should follow their lead and not give up on inter-city passenger rail.

**James L. Oberstar, Potomac**

The writer, a Democrat from Minnesota, served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1975 to 2011. He chaired the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure from 2007 to 2011.

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