

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1515

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to require that any discretionary grant funds provided by the Department of Transportation for high-speed rail development in California be reimbursed to the Federal Government and to authorize additional funds for nationally significant freight and highway projects.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 5, 2019

Mr. LAMALFA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to require that any discretionary grant funds provided by the Department of Transportation for high-speed rail development in California be reimbursed to the Federal Government and to authorize additional funds for nationally significant freight and highway projects.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “High-Speed Refund
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) When presented to voters in 2008, Califor-
4 nia's high-speed rail system was projected to cost
5 \$33.6 billion for a line from San Francisco to Ana-
6 heim, increasing \$40 billion to add lines to Sac-
7 ramento and San Diego.

8 (2) The expanded project's cost swelled to more
9 than \$100 billion, with the San Francisco to Ana-
10 heim line costing more than \$77 billion, and now the
11 State of California's high-speed rail plan no longer
12 includes any stops in Sacramento, San Francisco,
13 Los Angeles, Anaheim, or San Diego.

14 (3) When presented to voters in 2008, Cali-
15 fornia claimed the Federal Government would pay
16 between a quarter and a third of the cost of the rail
17 system.

18 (4) The Federal Government had no such grant
19 program at the time, and the \$4 billion invested in
20 the project represents less than 5 percent of the up-
21 dated cost projections.

22 (5) At the current level of project employment
23 it would take nearly 400 years to accomplish the
24 1,000,000 job-years promised by the California
25 High-Speed Rail Authority.

1 (6) No significant private companies have in-
2 vested in the California high-speed rail project.

3 (7) The grant creation and award process for
4 the California high-speed rail project did not incor-
5 porate the best practices of Government funding.

6 (8) The grant agreement between the Federal
7 Government and California did not require a feasible
8 funding package to be prepared before awarding
9 funds, which similar mass transit programs require.

10 (9) The grant agreement between the Federal
11 Government and California did not require a min-
12 imum operable segment before awarding funds,
13 which similar mass transit programs require.

14 (10) The grant agreement between the Federal
15 Government and California did not require new
16 high-speed trains to run on the new high-speed rail
17 system.

18 (11) The Department of Transportation inap-
19 propriately allowed the State of California to spend
20 Federal money without a required State funding
21 match.

22 (12) The California High-Speed Rail Authority
23 repeatedly failed to meet deadlines and underesti-
24 mated costs.

1 (13) On March 5, 2019, the Federal Rail Ad-
2 ministration, having recognized the failure of Cali-
3 fornia to build even a small fraction of the originally
4 approved high-speed rail system, deobligated nearly
5 \$1 billion in Federal funding.

6 (14) No passenger rail system in the world has
7 ever been fully self-sufficient.

8 (15) There are dozens of worthy infrastructure
9 projects that would improve the quality of life for
10 every day Americans and could easily have been de-
11 signed, approved, built, and have benefitted local
12 economies in the time it took for California's high-
13 speed rail proposal to fail.

14 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

15 It is the Sense of Congress that any future high-
16 speed rail grant programs that are awarded funds by the
17 Federal Government should have similar or higher re-
18 quirements than existing mass transit programs.

19 **SEC. 4. TREATMENT OF FUNDS PROVIDED FOR HIGH-**
20 **SPEED RAIL DEVELOPMENT IN CALIFORNIA.**

21 (a) REIMBURSEMENT OF FUNDS.—The Secretary of
22 Transportation shall take such action as is necessary to
23 require that any discretionary grant funds provided to the
24 State of California by the Department of Transportation

1 for high-speed rail corridor development be reimbursed to
2 the general fund of the Treasury.

3 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR NA-
4 TIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FREIGHT AND HIGHWAY
5 PROJECTS.—Section 1101(a)(5)(E) of the FAST Act (23
6 U.S.C. 101 note) is amended by striking “\$1,000,000,000
7 for fiscal year 2020” and inserting “\$4,500,000,000 for
8 fiscal year 2020”.

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