

## Trump Administration Withdraws \$4 Billion from California High-Speed Rail Project

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The Trump administration has officially withdrawn approximately \$4 billion in federal funding from California's high-speed rail project, citing chronic delays, cost overruns, and failure to meet construction benchmarks. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, in coordination with President Trump, described the project as a fiscal misstep that no longer justifies federal support.

The decision followed a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) review that found the California High-Speed Rail Authority could not meet its revised timelines and faced a \$7 billion shortfall for the Central Valley segment alone. Originally conceived as a transformative infrastructure initiative, the project has struggled with skyrocketing costs and shifting priorities.

President Trump condemned the effort on social media, branding it a “train to nowhere” and accusing state leaders of mismanaging taxpayer dollars. Duffy echoed the administration’s stance, stressing that federal funding should be tied to measurable progress and financial responsibility, neither of which he believes California has demonstrated.

In response, Governor Gavin Newsom criticized the administration’s decision, calling it politically motivated and a violation of federal agreements. Newsom emphasized that construction remains active, with more than 50 structures under development along a 171-mile stretch in the Central Valley. He vowed to fight the move in court and reaffirmed California’s commitment to delivering high-speed rail without Washington’s help.

The high-speed rail project, first approved by voters in 2008 through Proposition 1A, aimed to connect San Francisco and Los Angeles with trains running at speeds up to 220 miles per hour. Initial cost estimates of \$33 billion have since ballooned to between \$89 billion and \$128 billion. Delays, land acquisition hurdles, and environmental reviews have pushed full completion out to 2033, with current efforts focused only on the Central Valley.

Supporters argue that despite setbacks, the project is vital for reducing emissions, modernizing transportation, and generating jobs. They also

note that federal funds account for less than a quarter of the project's total cost, with state-issued bonds and California's cap-and-trade revenue covering the majority.

However, the ballooning budget and limited progress have raised serious doubts in Washington. The Trump administration is also reviewing legal avenues to recoup funds already distributed to the state.

This latest move underscores the growing divide between state and federal priorities on infrastructure. It signals that large-scale public works will increasingly be subject to tighter federal scrutiny, especially when plagued by inefficiency and mismanagement.