



The National Corridors Initiative, Inc.

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To the Candidates for President and the Party Platform Committees, we submit:

The St. Louis Statement on the Crisis in American Transportation At The Carmichael Conference*

The silence of those now running for the office of President on the growing crisis in our nation's transportation infrastructure is deafening. We have all heard about the crisis in the economy, and changes in the earth's climate brought on by global warming, but we have heard nothing about one key element that underlies both of those issues: the movement of goods and people, our very freedom of mobility. Yet, few national issues offer a greater opportunity for imaginative change.

We speak to those candidates now, today. We are from both political parties, and from no political party. We are from New England, and California, and Louisiana, and Illinois, and places in between, gathered this day in St. Louis for the inaugural Carmichael Conference* on the Future of American Transportation, to advocate for the renewal of that infrastructure. We respectfully ask each one of you:

- Do you understand that transportation must be treated as a system, not merely a collection of competing modes, when setting and executing policy?
- How do you propose to restore our transportation system to health?
- What are you going to do, specifically, to obtain the funding needed to do that?

As both advocates and professional executives, as both elected and appointed officials from around this country, as American citizens, we call on you to engage this issue, and make it an integral part of your campaign. As former American Airlines CEO Robert Crandall said in his very powerful address to us: "It's late in the game, and we are far past the time when our national leaders should have laid out, debated, and implemented an integrated, carefully thought-out and effective national plan for developing and deploying an optimized national transportation system."

The American people need rational choices when it comes to transportation, and those choices must be adequately and intelligently funded and maintained to make it all work. In particular, an efficient transportation system and robust rail, air, coastal/riverine, port, and highway components will sharply reduce both our dependence on foreign oil, and the high price we pay for it. Highly fuel-efficient, environmentally-friendly transportation modes, such as rail, should especially not be overlooked.

You are asking us to select you as the leader of our country. Very well: we ask you to lead. Seize this issue, and make it central to your campaign, as it is to every American's life. Thus far it has been virtually ignored. We ask that to change, starting now.

* The Carmichael Conference on the Future of American Transportation was convened January 28-29, 2008, at St. Louis, by the National Corridors Initiative (www.nationalcorridors.org) with the help and support of the Sierra Club, The National Association of Railroad Passengers, and the following organizations: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, American Public Transportation Association, American Road and Transportation Builders, Association of American Railroads, Association for Public Transportation, Bombardier Transit, Connex/Veolia Transportation, InTrans Incorporated: A New Direction in Transportation Advocacy, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, Providence & Worcester Railroad, The Surdna Foundation, Train/Riders NorthEast, Victoria Transportation Policy Institute, Virginians for High Speed Rail, and named in honor of former Federal Railroad Administrator Gilbert Carmichael, one of America's leading transportation advocates who continues actively to champion transportation intermodalism.