

Tomorrow Is Make Or Break For America's Ambitious High Speed Rail Project

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Last month we told you the future of many high-speed rail projects would come down to November. Well November has arrived, and Chris Christie's decision to kill the ARC tunnel, America's largest transportation project, has made the power of governors to derail train projects clear and present. The DOT's assignment of \$2.4 billion in additional high-speed rail funds last week only adds to the stakes. With that in mind, we thought we'd check back one last time at some of the gubernatorial contests in states with a lot of bullet train money on the line.

California

California just added more than \$900 million to the billions it already received in federal high-speed rail funding. A spokesman for Republican candidate Meg Whitman recently told the *New York Times* that Whitman "doesn't believe we can afford the costs associated with new high-speed rail at this time." Democrat Jerry Brown's campaign website makes it clear that he supports rail "as a clean, fast, accessible alternative" to air and highway travel—one that will create jobs to boot. Brown won.

Connecticut

Connecticut was a major winner in last week's funding release, pulling in \$120 million for the New Haven-Springfield corridor. The state might be in fine shape regardless of the outcome. Republican Tom Foley says he favors high-speed rail, while Democratic candidate Dan Malloy is on record as being a "big believer" in rail investment. Malloy won.

Florida

The state's Tampa-Orlando high-speed corridor is set to become a model for the current administration. Republican candidate Rick Scott has criticized the train in the past, but seems to have softened his stance of late. Democrat Alex Sink is a clear supporter of all rail in Florida. Scott won.

Iowa

The state received a major rail windfall last week: \$230 million for a line from Iowa City to Chicago. A clear position from Republican candidate Terry Branstad is hard to find, but his campaign spokesman declined to comment on the use of state money for the Iowa City line. Democrat Chet Culver, the state's current governor, not only supports the line—he wants to be its first passenger. Branstad won.

Illinois

Republican Bill Brady hasn't spoken out against federal rail money, but he has voted against state funding for such projects. Democrat Patrick J. Quinn, meanwhile, the current governor, is a clear rail champion in the Midwest. Quinn won.

Massachusetts

Republican Charlie Baker recently said the state should improve the infrastructure it has and be “very careful” when it comes to expansion. Democrat Deval Patrick, the current governor, has made clear commitments to high-speed rail in the region. Patrick won.

Michigan

It's difficult to find a rail position for Republican candidate Rick Snyder, though his campaign site does broadly state his approval of a “long-range transportation plan” and investment in the state's crumbling infrastructure. Democrat Virg Bernero is a clear supporter; he “believes it is imperative to focus regionally on transit to allow people to commute effectively in and around large urban centers,” according to his campaign site. Snyder won.

New York

Democrat Andrew Cuomo seems certain to win his race—he leads Republican Carl Paladino 60-37—and has called high-speed rail “a key component” of the state's infrastructure plans. Cuomo won.

Ohio

Republican John Kasich has made his opposition to rail crystal clear: “If you want that train, I hope you can get over that and vote for me anyway, but you're not going to get that train.” Meanwhile Democrat Ted Strickland, the current governor, pushed hard for federal rail money. Kasich won.

Texas

Republican Rick Perry, the incumbent, once called high-speed rail an “important option” for transportation, but his heart clearly pines for what Streetsblog DC calls “autocentric transportation planning.” Democrat Bill White supports some bullet lines, so long as the federal funding is there and local leadership wants it. Perry won.

Vermont

Republican Brian Dubie appears to break with his party on the matter of high-speed rail; he says he's a great believer in “its enormous potential for spurring economic growth and enhancing our quality of life.” Democrat Peter Shumlin, meanwhile, has a long history of rail support. Shumlin won.

Wisconsin

Republican Scott Walker, creator of notrain.com, has largely defined his campaign through his opposition to high-speed rail. Democrat Tom Barrett, current mayor of Milwaukee, has seen train ridership between his city and Chicago increase in recent years, and believes the same thing will happen with the state's proposed bullet line to Madison. Walker won.