"Amtruk"
Executive Summary

By revolutionizing railroad terminal and switch yard operations, it is possible to create a new type of high speed railroad that will attract long haul truckers to move their rigs by rail instead of on the highway, whenever this rail option is available. Truckers will be attracted to such a rail transport option if the following two conditions can be met:

1. It must cost the trucker no more than he would pay to travel by highway, and
2. It must get him to his destination at least as fast as if he drove the truck himself, including the time to load onto a rail-car and later to unload.

Both of these objectives are achievable using existing technology, by creating an entirely new type of terminal system and an entirely new type of railroad switching yard.

We need a nationwide high-speed railroad grid, not primarily for passenger traffic, but rather to provide for high-speed scheduled freight service. Such a grid could substantially improve our national economy, in the same way the interstate highway system has.

You need only look at the number of long-haul trucks on our interstate highways to realize what a grossly inefficient freight transportation network we currently have. Each truck consumes much more fuel than transporting the same payload by rail, and a driver must be driving each truck for the entire trip. Current attempts at transporting freight by rail involve separating the load from the truck driver and the tractor. Trailers have to be laboriously loaded on rail-cars using cranes. And when was the last time you or anyone you know received anything via *scheduled* rail freight service?

This current proposal takes a completely different approach: Drive the entire truck onto a rail-car for transport, including the driver. There are three significant economies that can result from this type of rail transport: (a) the obvious reduction in the fuel costs and the wear on the truck, (b) as much as a 60% reduction in labor costs associated with long haul trucking, and (c) a major reduction in the maintenance of the interstate highways, resulting from the reduced traffic.

The very large reduction in labor costs results from the fact that the truck drivers can be sleeping or resting during the rail part of the trips. This eliminates the need for rest stops or the need for a second driver in order to keep a truck moving. When he reaches his rail disembarkation point, the driver is rested and ready to start a new shift.

If we as a nation create such a high speed scheduled freight transportation system, it could be a *very* profitable investment. Such a national rail grid could also be used for high speed passenger traffic at a very small additional investment. It is time to take a serious look at this idea.

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April 20, 2010