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AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka wants it. The rent-seeking and increasingly statist U.S. Chamber of Commerce wants it. So does RINO Senator Lindsey Graham. Senator John Kerry really wants it. Former SEIU boss Andy Stern envisions it being a mechanism to tax the overseas profits of multinational corporations. President Obama is supposedly **obsessed** with it and is considering making it part of his latest "jobs plan."

It is an infrastructure bank. The idea, under different names, has been around for several years. The government-owned entity would provide funding for, primarily, transportation

projects through federally funded loans, guarantees, and grants and "leverage" those funds to "attract significant private-sector investment." Tax payers would initially capitalize and ultimately underwrite the "bank" (a misnomer, as banks do not award grants).

In theory, the concept has certain merits, but the reality, especially in the grips of big government ideologues, would be something different. To call for such an entity is to admit governments' past failures and improvidence in this critical area, highlighting the untold amounts squandered on non-critical if not wasteful, even unconstitutional, expenditures. Recall that the massive, \$800 billion "stimulus" bill in 2009 was sold largely on the premise of funding much-needed infrastructure improvements and repairs.

For centuries, this country has financed most of its local, state and federal infrastructure through our existing governmental bodies and taxing authorities--without an infrastructure bank--via regular appropriations, municipal bond markets, and other means.

Ronald Utt, Ph.D, of the [Heritage Foundation](#) thinks the idea of an infrastructure bank is "a dangerous

distraction and a waste of [Obama's] time." Paul Roderick Gregory of [Forbes](#) believes such an institution "would simply be a political slush fund and encourage wasteful spending by political cronies." Conn Carroll of the [Washington Examiner](#) describes the proposed bureaucracy as "just another stimulus boondoggle." House Republicans are **suspicious** that such a bank "is nothing more than a vehicle for more stimulus spending, disguised as "capital investment."" Picture a kind of TARP/stimulus/Fannie Mae Frankenstein.

Big, federally directed and funded infrastructure projects are currently viewed by many on the American left as a panacea to the ailing economy and to their guy's re-election chances. That belief, writes [Chris Edwards](#) of Cato Institute, is a "liberal fairy tale, detached from the actual experience of most federal agencies over the last century." As Carroll [put it](#), "When [infrastructure spending] decisions are made at the federal level, politics, not cost-benefit analysis, dictates what gets funded."

The track records of our country's existing governmental "banks," like the Federal Reserve, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac, don't bode well for a national infrastructure bank. Like most "public-private partnerships," the associated risks would be borne solely or disproportionately by the public. Further, granting decision-making authority to unelected bureaucrats rather than elected officials is a bad idea (though neither is perfect). A national infrastructure bank would be an embodiment of statism, central authority, deficit spending, and social engineering (think "green jobs" and union favoritism) in the form of a new, eternal and ever-expanding federal bureaucracy. It is exactly what we don't need.

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Bob the Engineer 09/04/2011 02:50 AM

How many of the grants will go to red states and to non-union contractors? None! The Solyndra debacle ought be proof enough that this regime can not be trusted to pick winners and losers, just losers. Obummer already admitted that there are no "shovel ready" Infrastructure projects so what exactly is this "bank" going to fund? This is just another obvious attempt to appear to be doing something when Obummer's regime knows that no jobs will be created before 2013. This is crony capitalism compounded by cynicism.

Patriotny 09/04/2011 03:36 AM

Those guys in Washington never rest. Day after day they scheme to find another way to bring in money from U.S. citizens. The state and local governments know what they need. The jokers in Washington couldn't run a lemonade stand for profit.

Bubba's BBQ 09/04/2011 04:33 AM

If that cast of misfits and thugs want it, then I am absolutely against it on principle.

Then again the very idea of huge sums of money pooled into an agency with no accountability is just screaming mismanagement and corruption. two good reasons to be against it.

DaveT 09/04/2011 07:27 AM

Another government run bank, what could go wrong? Amazing how they claim business is corrupt, corporations are corrupt but government? Never, why as pure as the wind driven snow. Angelic, why government and politicians could never be corrupt. It makes me ill to think of this happening.

PattyMor 09/04/2011 09:11 AM

Read Reckless Endangerment to see how swell the public/private relationship worked for housing. This is nothing more than a Fannie Mae for roads and bridges. Its a very bad idea. We have enough money to repair roads and bridges. Cut out the crap in the budget and voila! you have plenty of money. And, no,no, no to spending Federal Dollars to repair local school buildings. That is the responsibility of the local school district.

Rurik 09/04/2011 10:46 AM

Estaablish a new bank and place their own gangsters in charge. Then when the new Republican , or Tea Party, government wins overwhelming majorities in both houses of congress and the White House, the Dems will still hae astrategic position from which they can control the government via finance and continue their looting.

JoeD 09/04/2011 11:16 AM

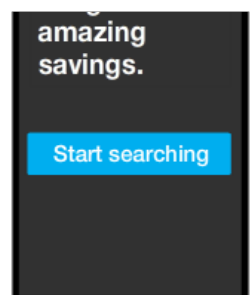
If I understand it correctly, funds for such a bank would be off-budget, so a balanced budget amendment would have no effect on it. Oversight would be by a board appointed by the President, with no congressional supervision. Besides all of the good things about this bank that have already been mentioned, it would fund short distance rail lines to suburbs for people who have discovered that electric cars won't make a roundtrip to work and back and need a way to get there.

DrAwesome 09/04/2011 11:38 AM

The bureaucracy is expanding to meet the needs of the expanding bureaucracy.

Antoninus 09/04/2011 11:47 AM

Patriotny: no, they couldn't run a lemonade stand for profit, but they can surely shut one down for not having a permit. The progressives have tried to morph "taxes" into "investments" and this is just



the latest maneuver in that quest. These aren't "taxes," they're "investments" and this infrastructure bank is going to streamline the process. We all know this and none of us support it because we've seen the lousy record the government has with other infrastructure banks such as Fannie Mae, Sallie Mae, and Freddie Mac. Have we forgotten the housing crisis so soon? Not to mention the resulting economic depression and credit downgrade.

Gunny G 09/04/2011 12:58 PM

ANYTHING that the Left and the Unions endorse is BAD for America. It really is that simple.

Lindenlee Today 12:32 AM

And now on Labor Day, Obama has been to Michigan, where Hoffa the Younger declared "war" on American's patriots and Tea Party activists, all with Presidential approval.

Well, let's declare "war" right back, and up the ante. Let's get some Congresspeople with spines to propose a bill that repeals Davis-Bacon. It was established as a racist law to keep blacks out of construction. Repeal would also open the field for more contractors, not just union ones, and AND it would save money for any federal infrastructure projects (although the ones funded by the states would not be affected).

Three benefits for the price of one: 1) Reducing racism and opening up more opportunity for unemployed minorities; 2) Expanding [employment opportunities](#) for smaller businesses with truly competitive bidding, and 3) Reducing the deficit through lower labor costs. How could any right-minded person be against that?!

He- he.. I can just taste the deliciousness of it all. The Obamabots would squeal like stuck pigs. No insult to pigs intended.

