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The Boondoggle Boys

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Governor Rick Snyder cares how your precious state tax dollars are spent. Your federal dollars? Not so much.

Michigan's CEO has earned applause for a long overdue tightening of Lansing purse strings. So why was he playing deputy to Transportation Chief Ray LaHood this week as Big Ray announced yet another Big Government scheme to swindle Americans of their tax money and send it to Michigan unions?

Call Snyder Deputy Boondoggle.

In May, Snyder played elf to Santa LaHood as LaHood (and Santa Levin and Mrs. Stabenow Claus) came with a \$200 million "high speed rail" set for Democratic unions to build. As the Cato Institute's Randall O'Toole reported for MIView, LaHood's rail is a fraud (the average speed <http://www.nationalreview.com/planet-gore/267336/great-train-con-part-1-henry-payne>">would only increase from 60 to 64 mph saving a mere 12 minutes of travel time) based on <http://hsr-marilyn.blogspot.com/2011/05/otoole-great-train-con-2-michigan-cooks.html>">fraudulent accounting.

Now comes LaHood with more millions to prop up Detroit's bus unions as well as convert their buses to the green religion. "The troubled Detroit Department of Transportation will receive \$6 million of the \$46.7 million in funding statewide to replace buses," reports The Detroit News. "Troubled" is an understatement. And it has nothing to do with old buses. DDOT's unions are famously intransigent, idling while half the department's rolling stock is in disrepair.

As The Detroit News has editorialized, the solution is to eliminate the dysfunctional DDOT and contract with the suburban SMART system. No DDOT, no intransigent unions. But LaHood's DDOT gift will only reward union tactics and waste taxpayer money. It is something Sheriff Snyder would stop as governor. But since its federal tax money, well - SOOOOOEEEEEE!

This is the downside of the "businessman governor." The green eyeshade Snyder fights for what's good for his "company" — the state, in this case — regardless of how irresponsible that may be for the nation's fiscal sanity. Like the \$2 billion the drowning-in-red-ink feds are using to buy off Snyder to build the new Canadian bridge across the Detroit River.

Deputy Boondoggle also gets an eco-halo courtesy of your wallet.

SMART gets nearly \$5 million in new hybrid biodiesel/electric buses. Never mind that biodiesel comes with massive federal subsidies. Never mind that electric buses, <http://www.mackinac.org/12117>">reports the Mackinac enter, cost FOUR times as much as regular buses. The money comes from the federal "stimulus" con which was sold as helping

America bridge the financial crisis — but which is really a bridge back in time to money-losing government transit schemes.

It's fun to play with other people's money.

Snyder's co-Deputy Boondoggle, Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, said the federal funds "will allow the city of Detroit to put new buses on the street and improve maintenance on the rest of our aging fleet" after he gets the city's troubled bus system under control in the "next 30 days or so." Good luck with that. The federal dollars, in fact, just became his enemy as unions will demand more rather than reform with less.

But wait, there's more.

LaHood and his deputies also sank \$2 million more — on top of \$25 million already flushed — into The Woodward Light Rail Project. "The Woodward Avenue Light Rail project holds enormous promise," LaHood said. Promises, promises.

The People Mover too came with lots of federal dollars and promise. "The elevated train opened its doors to the public in 1987 amid great expectations," reminds MIView's Bill Johnson. "When completed, the costs were SEVEN TIMES the original \$30 million estimate. Federal transit officials originally projected the train would carry 71,000 passengers per day. That was lowered to 35,000 and later to 10,000-15,000 a day. A taxpayer subsidy was required to keep it on track."

It's Groundhog Day. Here we go again.

Is it any wonder this country's in debt up to its eyeballs? It would be nice if The Boondoggle Boys and their media lapdogs would bark at this boondoggle. But pork always tastes good. Especially when someone else pays for it.