



Off the rails: Hawaii project costing taxpayers \$1 billion per mile

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As he attempts to explain that everything and everyone counts as “infrastructure,” here’s some infrastructure truth for Joe Biden.

The long-delayed Honolulu rail project is the most expensive in modern history. / Wikimedia Commons

A rail project in Hawaii that was started in the Obama-Biden administration has yet to be completed and is costing U.S. taxpayers \$1 billion per mile.

“This rail service began as one of those ‘shovel ready’ projects funded by the Obama-Biden stimulus program a decade ago. While never completed, it’s still digging a deeper money pit for taxpayer dollars,” Iowa Republican Sen. Joni Ernst noted in her latest uncovering of federal pork.

Ernst pointed to the long-delayed and over-budget 20-mile Honolulu rail project to caution against a rush to spend taxpayer dollars freely on infrastructure projects touted as ready to go by local governments.

The Honolulu rail project was initially set to be completed in January 2020 for \$5.1 billion. Ernst noted that the 20-mile rail line now might not be ready until 2033 and will cost at least \$21 billion.

As the project was struggling back in 2017, Randal O’Toole, a transportation expert and senior fellow at the Cato Institute, noted: “There is no question that the Honolulu rail project is the most expensive per capita of any publicly funded rail project in the modern age.”

In 2009, President Barack Obama called them “shovel ready” projects. Under Biden’s so-called “infrastructure” plan, such boondoggles as the Hawaii rail project are expected to be prioritized. Biden calls them “shovel-worthy,” according to officials.

It’s all part of that wonderful “Build Back Better” ideology.

Ernst said, “I vote we change the slogan to: ‘Bailout Bankrupt Boondoggles.’ That’s more appropriate for Washington’s track record of finding new ways to fund failed projects.”

Citing the Hawaii rail project’s failures, Ernst pushed for the passage of her Billion Dollar Boondoggle Ban Act to stop federal spending on projects \$1 billion or more over budget or five years or more behind schedule. The senator’s Earmark Elimination Act would stop lawmakers from spending on pet projects.

