# AFF CASE:

I affirm the resolution: Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its investment in high-speed rail.

#### Definitions:

**What is High-Speed Rail?**

**, 17** (, 6-9-2017, accessed on 8-31-2022, High Speed Rail Alliance, "What is High-Speed Rail?", https://www.hsrail.org/what-high-speed-rail)

There is no fixed definition of high speed rail. It can be loosely defined as trains operating at speeds of at least 125 mph, with the fastest modern trains reaching speeds of about 220 mph. HSR is also defined by dedicated tracks and separated grade crossings, which dramatically reduce delays. And HSR is almost always part of a network of conventional and commuter trains, as well as transit systems. When all of these pieces are tightly coordinated and working in harmony, HSR creates a paradigm shift in travel options.

**High-speed rail is a proven technology, with operating networks in over 20 countries.** We can draw upon those experiences to build networks that meet our needs.

High-speed trains are a lot like regular trains, with steel wheels traveling over steel rails, but **they use dedicated high-speed tracks and specialized train equipment to go really fast.** Today's fastest trains regularly travel at 220 mph. (A French test train reached 357 mph, the current record.)

## Contention 1: Economic Stimulation

#### Wonkabout Washington: Designing High-Speed Rail for Equity and Regulating King County Wineries

**Futurewise, 19** (Futurewise, 5-29-2019, accessed on 9-11-2022, The Urbanist, "Wonkabout Washington: Designing High-Speed Rail for Equity and Regulating King County Wineries", https://www.theurbanist.org/2019/05/28/wonkabout-washington-designing-high-speed-rail-for-equity-and-regulating-king-county-wineries/)

As The Urbanist recently reported, Washington state is moving forward with funding studies for an interstate high-speed rail line corridor between Vancouver, British Columbia and Eugene, Oregon. For the past year, Futurewise has served as the only advocacy organization on the Ultra-High Speed Rail Advisory Group, which is providing feedback and guidance to the consultant team preparing a feasibility study of the project. Our top concern as a member of the Advisory Group is ensuring a strong equity focus in decision-making, especially given that community-based organizations have not yet been invited to the Advisory Group. While equity is mentioned by group members and consultants as a concern, from our perspective, equity is not yet leading the charge in the discussion, which to date has centered on priorities like alignments, cost, and environmental impacts. But from our perspective, equity is the lens by which we must evaluate all priorities: alignments serving whom, costs borne by whom, environmental benefits received by whom? Station siting is a top concern for Futurewise in terms of determining equitable distribution of benefits and burdens for investments in ultra-high speed rail. Stations are a critical element of the ultra-high speed rail project as they drive ridership and will have large impacts on land use, transportation and housing in the areas in which they are constructed–issues that are largely outside the control of this project’s scope unless other state initiatives fill the gap. A potential future station in Kelso/Longview highlights these concerns. Currently, two of the three proposed alignments and station locations show Longview/Kelso as a potential stop, which makes sense given the existing Amtrak stop in Kelso. However, Kelso has a 29% poverty rate (more than twice the state average), and the median property value is $125,000, about a third of the state average. A high-speed rail line that would allow people to live in Kelso or Longview and easily commute to Seattle has the potential to increase access to jobs and drive economic development. At the same time, absent other policy interventions, a new stop is also likely to increase sprawl, gentrification and displacement of vulnerable populations in the area. The use of a racial equity lens in the project development would help address these issues–but has the train already left the station? We hope not. Futurewise helped spark and now sits on an equity-focused sub-committee of the group that is developing a racial equity “statement” for the project and has recommended that the next phase of the project include an equity advisor as part of the team. Our hope is that this advisor can facilitate future discussion–including input from community–around station siting and other issues from an equity perspective. The King County Council is considering Ordinance 2018-0241 that would change regulations for wineries, breweries and distilleries in the county.