

VS:

- [Barack Obama](#)
- |
- [Supreme Court](#)
- |
- [Al Franken](#)
- |
- [Sonia Sotomayor](#)
- |

[More...](#)

June 5, 2009


This is the print preview: [Back to normal view »](#)



[Gov. David A. Paterson](#), [Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger](#) and [Gov. Ed Rendell](#)

Posted: June 3, 2009 02:40 PM

The Moment for Public-Private Partnerships Is Now

Read More: [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), [Crumbling Infrastructure](#), [David Paterson](#), [Economy](#), [Ed Rendell](#), [Global Recession](#), [Infrastructure](#), [National Infrastructure](#), [President Obama](#), [Private-Public Partnerships](#), [Recession](#), [Politics News](#) [digg](#)  [stumble](#) [redc](#)

Can the United States recover from the current economic crisis and compete in the 21st century? Of course we can. We have the best universities, the most dynamic companies, and a thriving tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship.

To regain our economic competitiveness, however, we must face up to a hard truth: our infrastructure is falling apart.

Ever since the 1970s, public investment in infrastructure has been steadily declining. And today, we are paying the price -- bridges, delayed trains, canceled flights, overcrowded classrooms, outdated hospitals, failing water and sewer systems, a

Here's another hard truth: just as America's infrastructure is falling apart, our competitors are strengthening theirs. China, for example, has 100,000 miles of highways -- more than the entire length of the American interstate highway system -- and 7,500 miles of high-speed

The good news is that we already possess the technology and expertise to build a world-class infrastructure. The bad news is that state and local governments, which traditionally finance infrastructure projects, lack the necessary resources. (While President Obama's stimulus plan has been successful in putting people back to work, it is, by design, a short-term solution that represents only a small investment we need.)

Therefore, if we are to finance and build a world-class infrastructure for America, we must seek new solutions. And a pro-private partnerships.

By combining government oversight with private-sector efficiencies, we can build more projects; we can build them more quickly for our citizens; and we can lower costs for taxpayers. And by infusing billions of private-sector dollars into infrastructure, we also put millions of Americans back to work.

Rigorous accountability measures are a necessary part of any public-private partnership. Private-sector companies given the right to own or operating public facilities must be held to the same thorough standards as public agencies -- including strict labor and environmental standards.

When these accountability measures are in place, public-private partnerships work. An increasing number of highways -- in California, New York and Pennsylvania -- are being designed, built and operated by private companies. New York City is building better schools at a lower cost by using public-private partnerships. California has passed legislation to expand use of public-private partnerships in conjunction with mixed-use real estate developments. In Pennsylvania, the city of Pittsburgh is using public-private partnerships to expand parking in the city center.

And this week, New York's Commission on State Asset Maximization released a report recommending 26 pilot projects for wind power on the Great Lakes -- where public-private partnerships can move projects forward faster and at lower costs.

The moment for public-private partnerships is now. Our nation's infrastructure needs to be repaired and expanded. With 10 million unemployed, we need to create jobs. And, due to the recession, states and local governments are facing large deficits, limiting our ability to fund infrastructure.

Additionally, there is great demand among the private sector for these partnerships. Infrastructure assets generate stable, long-term returns, are largely shielded from market volatility. That's why -- despite the overwhelming capital and liquidity constraints facing the infrastructure funds continue to grow rapidly.

We strongly encourage our fellow governors and mayors to explore these types of partnerships. And we encourage the federal and local governments advance public-private partnerships.

President Obama, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Congressional leaders have already shown a promising interest -- and we encourage them to do even more. For example, in the upcoming federal transportation bill, Congress should strengthen and allow states and localities greater flexibility in seeking innovative approaches to infrastructure financing.

If you happen to be stuck in traffic, stranded at an airport, or crowded into a tiny classroom, our infrastructure crisis may seem like a problem we can solve -- but only if we have the courage to seek new solutions. Public-private partnerships must be a part of the solution. We need the resources we need to build a world-class infrastructure -- and restore America's competitiveness for decades to come.

- [Copyright © 2009 HuffingtonPost.com, Inc.](#) |
- [Archive](#) |
- [User Agreement](#) |
- [Privacy](#) |
- [Comment Policy](#) |
- [About Us](#) |
- [Powered by Movable Type](#)

