



FRA Issues Preliminary National Rail Plan

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On October 15, 2009, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued its Preliminary National Rail Plan (the Preliminary Plan) that sets out general principles and parameters to guide the development of policies to improve the nation's rail transportation system. The Preliminary Plan was mandated by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 and is intended to deploy rail's attributes to improve safety, foster livable communities, increase the economic competitiveness of the U.S., and promote sustainable transportation as part of a first-ever National Rail Plan. The Preliminary Plan reflects the introduction of high-speed rail as a significant component of the nation's rail transportation system and aims to increase the integration of all transportation modes. The Preliminary Plan identifies issues to be considered in formulating a National Rail Plan, rather than setting out prescriptive approaches and emphasizes that State rail plans are expected to play a large role in identifying issues and priorities.