



# PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jennifer Fennell  
PHONE: (850) 222-3767  
EMAIL: [jennifer@coremessage.com](mailto:jennifer@coremessage.com)

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**CONTACT:** Jennifer Fennell  
(850) 597-0057  
[jennifer@coremessage.com](mailto:jennifer@coremessage.com)

**Statement By:**  
**Barney Bishop III, President & CEO, Associated Industries of Florida**  
*Regarding the Formation of a Florida High Speed Rail Coalition*

“Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) has, for years, been a strong advocate of bringing high speed rail to our state. That is why AIF is announcing the formation of a coalition we will spearhead to ensure this valuable project remains on track. We are in the process of assembling the coalition, which will include the private-sector companies that want the jobs, the work and the prestige that will come from being a part of Florida high speed rail.

The Orlando to Tampa project will not only bring 5,000 construction jobs to Florida at a time when we desperately need them, but will also make an international impression as the home of the first high speed rail of its kind in this country.

Given our continued budget shortfalls, concerns have been expressed over any expenditure of state dollars, including for rail. It is important to remember that while a match of \$280 million is required in order to draw down the billions in federal dollars that are committed to this project, these dollars do not necessarily have to be state dollars and can come from the private sector. And although it is not expected, should the construction costs for this project run over or operating expenses exceed money brought in by riders, then the successful bidder will be responsible for these costs per contract requirements. Further, the federal government is offering up nearly \$2.4 billion in funding that if left on the table by Florida, will be quickly grabbed by another state.

AIF, our members and coalition partners want to see the bidding process for the project continue. Let’s give the private sector a chance to show us the level of risk and investment it is willing commit in order to launch high speed rail in Florida. Decisions to abandon the project can always be made further down the road if the conditions are not ideal. Right now, we have an opportunity to leverage private investment to secure billions in federal dollars for a project that will have an incredibly positive impact on our state. Let’s not derail high speed rail.”

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