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Trump’s Funding Threats Build a Case for Private High-Speed Rail.

While California High-Speed Rail’s federal funding is in doubt, privately led Brightline West has been chugging along.

California has helped create much of the technology powering the 21st century. But travel between Los Angeles and San Francisco by train still feels trapped in the past.

Now, the state’s plan to modernize that corridor — a long-promised high-speed rail line — is facing its most serious threat yet. President Donald Trump has called the project “stupid” and vowed to block $4 billion in federal funds, escalating a broader push by his administration to withdraw support from mass transit initiatives across the country. “This government is not going to pay,” he said earlier this month.

The threat lands at a critical moment. After years and years of delays and cost overruns, California’s high-speed rail project is approaching a point where additional funding is essential to keep construction moving. Without federal support, state officials warn that progress on the first segment from Bakersfield to Merced could stall — or stop entirely — potentially being the final nail in the coffin for the entire project.

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By Brian Kahn and Eliyahu Kamisher

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