Reopened Railway is a Key Link for the Economy and International Trade

The Project
Re-opening the only rail link to the east via the SD&AE Railway is needed to improve the international and interstate movement of goods in, out, and through the San Diego region.

» The SD&AE is working to restore essential freight service between San Diego and the Imperial Valley by rehabilitating the Desert Line portion of the SD&AE; the rail line has been out of service east of Tecate since 1983.

» Initial repairs to tunnels, trestles, and tracks need additional reliability improvements.

Benefits
The project can take full advantage of national and international trade markets and bridge a gap in the national supply chain.

» The connection with Imperial Valley would link San Diego and its port to the rest of the United States and Mexico, and vastly improve the region’s market opportunities.

» Maritime commerce at the Port of San Diego, and potentially the Port of Ensenada, could be expanded by offering access to two transcontinental rail carriers.

» Restoration of the railway could provide an important connection to the U.S. Naval Port facilities.

» The economic advantages can foster the region’s ability to attract jobs, rail-dependent manufacturers, and industries that support international shipping.

» The project offers new western port options for Imperial Valley, Arizona, and Mexico.

» The railway would reduce highway network impacts, reduce local transportation costs, and improve air quality by shifting goods from truck to rail.

Project Components

» Track alignment and tunnel clearance need upgrading to accommodate modern freight vehicles, which carry double-stack containers and automobiles.

» An accessible site within the San Diego/Tijuana region needs to be located for an intermodal yard to handle truck-to-rail transfers.

» Additional storage yards at the Port of San Diego and San Ysidro would be required for increased freight movements on the SD&AE.

Project Status
Carrizo Gorge Railway is now the freight operator in Mexico and on the Desert Line. They are making basic repairs but need additional improvements to run revenue service.

» In 2001, the state of Baja California awarded a 25-year concession for freight operations on the Tijuana & Tecate Line. Baja California also is pursuing a rail line to Ensenada to boost trade connections in the area.

» SANDAG is initiating a preliminary engineering study for the San Ysidro Intermodal Yard and an assessment of the yard’s role in regional freight movements.

(Continued on reverse)
The region also is embarking on a regional freight strategy to explore opportunities for international trade through our port and border gateways.

Funding Status

A funding package for the basic and modernization improvements has yet to be identified.

- SANDAG studies suggest a public/private partnership with the involvement of the railroads, shippers, the San Diego Unified Port District, industry, and government at all levels.
- Authorization in 1998 of TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, included $10 million for intermodal facilities, the first part of the $43.1 million needed to restore basic service.
- The next federal transportation bill should continue to include funding opportunities for short haul railroads like the SD&AE. It also should include funding for freight infrastructure that is part of the national supply chain and supports global gateways.

Cost Estimates $43 million to $105 million dependent on the project’s scope (1996 cost estimates)

- Improvements to restore basic service on the line, carrying bulk, breakbulk products, and single-stacked containers are estimated to cost:
  - Repairs to Reopen the Desert Line $7.9 million
  - Reliability Improvements $10.9 million
  - Staging Yards in San Ysidro $2.6 million
  - Customs Inspection Facilities $3.2 million
  - Intermodal Facility (Truck-to-Rail) $18.5 million

- Modernization improvements to handle longer and taller freight vehicles are estimated to cost:
  - Tunnel and Track Work on the Desert Line $56.2 million

- Additional improvements, assuming interchange with BNSF at the Port:
  - Staging Yard @ Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal $3.1 million
  - Extension of Bulk Facilities @ Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal $3.0 million

Grand Total: Basic Service, Modernization and Port Improvements $105.4 million