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## Build Pyramids instead

So honchos from the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce feel we need a commuter rail line between San Antonio and Austin to ease pressure on I-35. Since the chamber represents local businesspeople, let me restate their pitch for taxpayers' money as a business deal:

The project requires an upfront investment of \$475 million. Once built, it will require \$24 million a year to operate and maintain. Looking 16 years into the future, we think it'll have 11,000 customers per weekday, paying \$9 each.

We'll bring in \$24.8 million under optimum conditions. That leaves \$750,000 a year gross profit to pay off our investment. Not counting inflation, it'll take 633 years to pay it off.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation has pointed out, "on average, the number of vehicles removed by commuter rail would be less than one out of every 200." Whoopee.

Would any executive in the Chamber of Commerce sign up his business for that deal? If not, why would they be happy to throw our money into it? If we must waste a huge amount of money on a public project, let's rebuild the Pyramids. That, at least, would bring in plenty of tourists to marvel at our folly.

— Chris Marrou