

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence.

The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's current schedule at [www.tctv.net](http://www.tctv.net).

You can also watch the program described below (and more than 170 of our previous monthly interview programs and also many special programs) at the Olympia FOR's website, [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org). Simply click the "TV programs" link, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch. Many of our website's TV program listings also include links to documents summarizing the program in Word and/or .pdf format.

## December 2017

# "Solutionary Rail"

→ Please invite more people to watch this interview and/or read the thorough summary (which you're reading now) at the "TV Programs" part of [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org).

→ See sources of information near the end of this document.

by Glen Anderson, this TV series' producer and host

For almost 31 years, the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's TV series has explored a wide variety of issues related to peace, social and economic justice, the environment, and nonviolent social change. We especially provide opportunities for the public to hear voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

Our December 2017 program explores a remedy for several of our nation's problems that is both creative and exciting. This remedy would reduce fossil fuel use and protect our environment, climate, and public health. It would create jobs and help local communities throughout our nation.

This month's topic is **Solutionary Rail**. The website promoting it – [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) – describes it as "a people-powered campaign to electrify America's railroads and open corridors to a clean energy future." I agree with that summary, and Solutionary Rail offers many more benefits, which we'll discuss during this interview.

Our guest – **Bill Moyer** – is a key organizer of Solutionary Rail. He will help us explore this topic. He also is the Executive Director of the Backbone Campaign ([www.backbonecampaign.org](http://www.backbonecampaign.org)), which is based on Vashon Island in Puget Sound in Washington State.

Bill is a very savvy organizer whom I have respected for a number of years. He thinks strategically. Bill and the Backbone Campaign help people organize strategically smart movements for social change and creative activities that he refers to as "artful activism."

**A short video (3 minutes, 41 seconds) gives a good overview of Solutionary Rail.**

After I introduced the topic for this TV interview – and our guest – we watched a short video that the Solutionary Rail team produced to explain the great benefits of Solutionary Rail. In less than 4 minutes this video builds a strong case. We encourage people to watch the video at <http://www.solutionaryrail.org/srvideo>

**Why did the Backbone Campaign begin the Solutionary Rail project? How did this project come about?**

People know the Backbone Campaign ([www.backbonecampaign.org](http://www.backbonecampaign.org)) for its artful activism, training in nonviolent activities, and organizing kayaktivists to protest at waterfront locations. Bill explained how the Backbone Campaign decided to start the Solutionary Rail project. He uses large-scale strategic thinking (what he calls “Grand Strategy”) to organize grassroots movements to improve our society in various ways. The Solutionary Rail project emerged from a very broad alliance of people from different sectors who discovered that their interests and visions converged and evolved into this creative, bold proposal.

Also, he said that people who want to change society can “get bogged down in what we’re against,” but sometimes people “forget to champion what we’re for.” He said, “Our ‘NO’ can be only as powerful as our ‘YES’ is compelling.”

He said the path toward devising the Solutionary Rail proposal was not inevitable. It came as a surprise.

The billionaire Warren Buffett has a company, Berkshire Hathaway, that owns the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad. People who care about the environment and climate were thinking about organizing public pressure on Warren Buffett because he was using our beautiful region as a corridor for BNSF to export coal and oil to Asia. Their initial thinking was to create a moral argument against that.

But then Bill was approached by an environmental activist who was a railroad employee. She said that Bill and his colleagues have more in common with railroad labor than they had assumed. She educated Bill about some issues and introduced him to some other folks. During an event opposing coal trains, he noticed a railroad engineer on the panel. They started discussing whether railroads might have better potential than merely being a way to ship fossil fuels to Asia. That conversation evolved over time.

Later that engineer told Bill that in 2008 some railroad labor people had written a paper about modernizing a rail route from Seattle to Chicago. The engineer urged Bill’s people “to green it.”

Bill said if we’re to build a broad-based movement, it’s really important to take seriously the challenges offered by allies in other sectors, such as labor. So Bill put together a team that developed the proposal that became Solutionary Rail. The team included experts from railroads, environmental organizations, and so forth. They also got help from scientists, economists, artists and people in other sectors. He named many of these persons and credited Patrick Mazza, who served as the chief writer of the *Solutionary Rail* book. He said they worked on the concepts for several years before producing the book.

Glen encouraged people to buy the book for \$19.95.

Bill said that as the team was proceeding for several years, he became more and more convinced that this was the “YES” that protesters needed to be affirming even while they were blocking coal trains and oil trains and taking other actions to stop fossil fuel exports. Besides opposing the bad stuff we also need to support good alternatives. “How can we use the rails in a way to serve everybody?”

Glen said that some of the previous TV programs in this series (watchable through the “TV Programs” part of [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)) have dealt with coal trains, oil trains, and our Pacific NW region as the “Thin Green Line” preventing fossil fuel export.

Glen also encouraged people to watch – and share – the video we watched near the beginning of this interview. It is at <http://www.solutionaryrail.org/srvideo>

**Problems with trucks hauling much freight**

The video mentioned that since the middle of the 1900s there has been a major shift from freight hauled on railroads to hauling it on big trucks. What problems has truck-based freight been causing?

Bill said that the interstate highway system built since the 1950s has been a **publicly subsidized** transportation system that was immediately in competition with the existing (**privately owned**) railroad system.

Trucks are far less aerodynamic and far less efficient than trains. Truck tires have big footprints on roads, but trains’ steel wheels touch only small parts on rails. Trains are more efficient than trucks, so we should carry freight on trains.

As more and more freight was shifted from trains to trucks, the railroad companies became more dependent on heavy commodities traveling longer distance on longer trains. The railroad companies abandoned regular freight schedules, so manufacturers, importers and exporters could not rely on trains to move their freight on predictable schedules, so they started using trucks instead. Bill said trains are now carrying only 3.5% of the value of freight in the U.S., while trucks carry 70% of the value. Trains carry heavy stuff – 28% of the ton-miles – so they are carrying cheap, heavy commodities. Valuable freight goes mostly on trucks, and some on airplanes. Also, freight does not even get onto trains unless it is going long distances – hundreds of miles or longer. This results in some shipments traveling to a rail hub and then back-tracking on a truck for a long distance to its destination. This is very inefficient.

We want to get away from coal trains and get away from oil trains. This means that we and the railroads will have to figure out what should be traveling on trains.

Glen said that railroads have not only stopped regular freight schedules but have also stopped serving many local communities. This leaves those communities without alternatives to trucks for freight and without alternatives to individual cars for transporting people. Bill agreed. He said that in 1928 trains stopped in every town. He said we need to localize our economy, produce things in local communities, and serve local agriculture. All of these need local train service so they can get their output to market and help people move around.

Bill said we need to electrify the trains – and also electrify the trucks. But we can't electrify trucks that travel hundreds of miles. Electrifying short-haul trucks would be practical, but the long-haul trucking industry is not well suited to having electric trucks.

### **Instead of diesel trucks, we need electric rail. Many advantages of electric rail over trucks**

Solutionary Rail urges us to haul less on diesel trucks and use electric railroads instead. A very informative Power Point presentation summarizes some of the many advantages of electric rail instead of trucks. One slide identifies some "Advantages of Electric."

- Trains more aerodynamic than trucks
- Steel on steel (trains) more efficient than rubber on concrete (trucks)
- Electricity costs less than diesel fuel
- Regenerative braking reduces costs even more
- Electric locomotives are cheaper to buy and operate than diesel
- Electric locomotive maintenance costs are lower
- Electricity can be generated from clean renewable resources

We already mentioned that a steel wheel on a steel track has only about 1/10 of the friction of a tire on a road, so Solutionary Rail would enjoy a great efficiency. Also, trucks often travel empty for hundreds of miles when returning to their points of origin. Running trains on electricity is an important factor. Solutionary Rail would allow trains to be shorter in length, would have regular schedules, and would stop in many local places where they don't stop now.

Earlier we had mentioned the health and climate problems related to diesel exhaust. Diesel exhaust hurts workers and communities near truck depots and highways. We need to de-carbonize trucking also for the sake of the environment and climate. Modest trucks with shorter runs could run on electricity.

### **How would Solutionary Rail solve these problems?**

Our current systems contain many people, but we have become used to those problems and don't see the solutions. In contrast, Solutionary Rail offers solutions to a great many problems. We have discussed some of these, and Glen said that the more we explore Solutionary Rail, the more solutions we see it would offer. It's a win-win-win-win-win solution in so many ways!

Bill said we are in a time that needs big solutions rapidly. We have a limited amount of time to de-carbonize our economy. We need to de-carbonize our transportation system. He said 20% of our nation's greenhouse gases come from the transportation sector. While about 65% of that amount is "light-duty" vehicles such as cars, but much of our greenhouse gases come from trucks. Trains contribute a relatively small amount to our nation's greenhouse gases. But electrifying trains and providing regular service to more communities with shorter electric trains, we can not only stimulate local communities' economies but also get rid of the really dirty aspects of shipping that trucks cause.

**Solutionary Rail offers a strategically smart way to improve the economics of railroads.**

Solutionary Rail's website – [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) – explains how it would improve the economics of the railroad business. The website says:

Solutionary Rail proposes a strategy for shifting the economics of rail AWAY from dependence on moving heavy fossil fuel commodities and freight for exclusively large shippers to diversified high value freight. It is our compelling "YES!" -- an entirely doable vision that provides a win/win alternative to the boom and bust economics of ever-growing unit trains of coal and explosive oil.

Bill said that while trains have been getting longer and longer, the crews have been including fewer and fewer workers on each train. This hurts workers in several ways.

Railroad companies privately own the infrastructure (rails, etc.). It would be reasonable for the government to "nationalize" (own) the rails, so the public could own the rail infrastructure and manage it responsibly for the widest possible benefit, instead of purely private profit. Glen affirmed that much other crucial infrastructure is owned by the public, including highways, schools, fire departments, etc. He said many cities own their own electric utilities.

Bill said in the U.S. railroads are a "regulated monopoly" owned privately. That's why the U.S. lags behind other countries, where the public owns the railroads and can manage them more efficiently and progressively to serve the entire nations, not simply private profit. He said that investing in good infrastructure can serve long term needs, not be constrained by pressure for short-term profits, which is what stockholders demand.

He said Solutionary Rail "connects the dots" to serve the broad public good that would not only be an efficient railroad system but would also use the track routes as corridors for efficient overhead transmission of green electricity. (We discussed this latter point later during the interview.)

**Solutionary Rail offers a remedy for the inefficiency and waste that hurt environment and business.**

Glen said that people who care about the environment know that when any business causes waste, that **waste hurts the environment**. Our economy, our environment and our climate all need much more efficiency. **Solutionary Rail would improve efficiency**. The website says:

Solutionary Rail describes how track modernization, electrification and transmission infrastructure could augment the private rail infrastructure to speed up and increase efficiency of freight and passenger rail in order to draw freight and people off highways and airplanes and back onto the tracks. Increased speed and a capacity means better service to communities and producers all along the tracks.

Bill said we already have the efficiency of metal-on-metal." Nowadays trains are "diesel-electric," so diesel oil is burned to produce electricity to run the trains. Their internal combustion engines reduce the efficiency of what could be all-electric trains if we designed our system properly. They also cause unnecessary pollution.

If we had overhead electric lines above the track routes, we could use that electricity to power the trains. If we also reduced truck usage for long distances, used electricity to power the remaining trucks that would be used for short distances, and made other related savings, we could save much money and avoid much damage to our environment and climate.

Glen added that heavy trucks wear out our highways much worse than passenger cars do. If we can get freight out of trucks – off of our highways – and onto rails, this would save the general public a lot of money that we spend now resurfacing highways. This seems like a powerfully attractive reason for the general public – taxpayers – to support Solutionary Rail. Bill added that one big truck does the same amount of damage to a road as 5,000 cars.

Glen said that ordinary people end up paying for the inefficiency and damage that big trucks cause. Ruts cause wear to our cars and cause safety hazards and slow us down. Highway resurfacing also costs us money and slows us down. Trucks cost us as taxpayers as well as costing our time. He said everything points to Solutionary Rail as the remedy.

### **A Steel Interstate Development Authority (SIDA) and a “public belt over private right-of-way**

Solutionary Rail would need to combine the efforts of government and private companies, so the organizers are proposing a tax-exempt, not-for-profit Steel Interstate Development Authority (SIDA) that would work with railroads and other stakeholders in order to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance, build and operate the electrification and transmission infrastructure.

Solutionary Rail’s website mentions the necessary and practical entity that you call the “Steel Interstate Development Authority (SIDA).” The website says:

Solutionary Rail overcomes obstacles by creating of a tax-exempt, not-for-profit Steel Interstate Development Authority, or SIDA. The purpose of SIDA would be to initiate a public-private partnership with railroads and other stakeholders in order to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance, build, and operate the electrification and transmission infrastructure. The SIDA would create a tax-exempt “public belt,” over the private railroad right of way.

The website also says the SIDA’s semi-public ownership of the electrification infrastructure addresses the obstacles for private railroads who won’t invest in that aspect of the needed infrastructure despite it resulting in cleaner more efficient trains due to:

- the higher cost of private capital - AND -
- the property tax burden they'd have to pay on any improvements they owned

Bill explained that when a privately owned railroad invests in its infrastructure, this increase in its assets increases the amount of taxes it must pay. We don’t want to give railroad companies a bail-out, and we don’t propose nationalizing them. So a middle ground would be to create an interjurisdictional not-for-profit entity including state departments of transportations and perhaps tribes, and use this entity’s tax-exempt status to issue bonds to pay for building and operating an electrified transmission infrastructure. This would be a public belt above the trains running on the privately owned railroad track right-of-way.

Glen added that a lot of rail lines go through wide-open spaces in areas with a lot of sunlight and a lot of wind, so we could create solar energy collectors and windmills at many sites near the railroad right-of-way and feed electricity into the overhead electric lines running above the train routes. These decentralized solar and wind generators would power the trains and also provide electricity for local communities in those regions.

### **Synergies with renewable energy production and distribution corridors**

Glen said this is yet one more way in which Solutionary Rail would create synergies and win-win-win-win solutions to our nation’s problems. The various synergies and efficiencies would mutually reinforce each other.

Bill said the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) produced information in January 2016 about how to achieve 80% renewable energy by 2030. The solution requires many local sources of renewable energy.

He said it also urges high-voltage transmission of direct current (DC) electricity, which is more efficient than the alternating current (AC) that we typically use. AC loses energy when traveling hundreds of miles, but DC travels more efficiently. NOAA's map of our nation for this purpose is similar to the map for improving passenger rail service nationwide, Bill said. He said that it makes a lot of sense to use our rail corridors also for transmission of DC electricity. One of the biggest problems for any big-scale infrastructure (new freeways, new pipelines, etc.) is acquiring the right-of-way along the route. In this case, the railroad right-of-way already exists. It's just a matter of adding an electric layer overhead.

This is a crucial strategy for achieving our goals for de-carbonizing our nation's energy usage. We need these kinds of breakthrough strategies in order to reach our goals such as NOAA's 80% goal by 2030 or the 100% goal for 2035 set forth by the Council of Mayors and U.S. Representative Tulsi Gabbard.

Glen said we need to make sure the people and organizations who are working on the climate get links to watch this program (and read this thorough summary of what we said). We should also publicize this to other constituencies and organizations who would benefit by Solutionary Rail, "because we're all in this together!"

Bill agreed. He also said that people working on the climate need to pay attention to this remedy and not get narrowly focused on only rooftop solar or only a carbon tax or only "cap-and-trade" or only some other specific remedy. These individual remedies might be important, but we need larger infrastructure solutions such as Solutionary Rail.

He said we need to replace our dirty transportation system. And the remedy is not just for rich people who can afford to buy an electric Tesla car. He said the biggest employer in the U.S. is the trucking industry.

**Instead of a corporate give-away or privatization, this would be a win-win for jobs, communities, etc.**

Glen said that everybody admits that our nation's infrastructure is in very poor condition. We need to rebuild much of our infrastructure. But we must resist being fooled by Trump's proposals for, because those would rip off taxpayers in order to enrich big corporations that support Trump. A **corporate give-away** is the wrong approach.

Also, Trump would **privatize** many new infrastructure assets. Instead of privatizing the public's assets, we need to protect public ownership of the public's assets – and the broad public interest – and protect local communities, workers' rights, and other positive values.

Solutionary Rail is a very different kind of partnership – a healthy one, not with rip-offs embedded in it. Instead of a corporate giveaway, Solutionary Rail is a partnership that invigorates our transportation and energy infrastructure, creates jobs, and serves private and public interests with the mandates that:

- secure minimum crew sizes and labor conditions for safer trains and better jobs
- return of scheduled freight and service to underserved communities
- green the electricity used to power the trains
- requires resolution of easement issues on tribal land

Bill agreed. Solutionary Rail is **NOT a "bail-out"** for the railroad companies. Other nations have publicly owned electrified rail systems, and they are expanding them. Ethiopia is one of many nations that is moving boldly ahead. Railroad companies' current business model is not good, so the danger is that our government will simply bail them out without making the profound changes that our nation needs. For example, if the government would bail out the railroads by exempting them from paying taxes, the revenue shortfall would hurt the communities that rely upon that tax revenue. Nor should the public build the new infrastructure we're proposing and simply give it to the railroad companies.

The public needs to own and manage the new infrastructure. Instead of private financing the SIDA (which we mentioned earlier) could issue tax-exempt bonds to build the efficient new infrastructure for the public – overhead above private rail lines. Bill said that although Wall Street wants quick profits – a quick return on investments – the public is OK with investing in things that will benefit us over the long term, even decades ahead. "So we cannot leave this up to Wall Street."

**The realities of economics, the environment, the climate crisis, etc., seem to demand Solutionary Rail.**

Glen said that more and more people are paying attention to environmental problems, the climate crisis, and other hard realities. People are understanding economic realities too. All of these realities make a compelling case for Solutionary Rail.

**Other nations use electric trains, but only 1% of U.S. trains are electric.**

Glen said that Bill has already mentioned that other nations have already converted significantly toward electric trains. Although Trump wants to bog us down in old technology of oil and coal, other nations have been moving ahead with modern electrical energy, especially renewable energy. This is true in residential and commercial settings, and also in transportation. The Solutionary Rail website – [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) – said that only 1% of U.S. railways are electrified – only 1% – compared with 30% of India’s, 41% of China’s 46% of Russia’s 48% of Germany’s, 52% of France’s, and 64% of Italy’s. But only 1% of the U.S.’s railways are electrified. Glen said that while other nations – including Ethiopia – are moving ahead, the U.S. is becoming a backward nation. He emphasized the need for our viewers to know that Solutionary Rail would modernize this aspect of the U.S.’s railways. Trump is moving us toward a backward nation by trying to bog us down with coal and oil technology – and denial of science – while the rest of the world moves ahead. Trump’s policies will NOT “make America great.” He is making us a backward nation.

Bill said that Trump’s rhetoric is just rhetoric. We will not really be moving back to the coal era. We both agreed that Trump is an obstacle to the progress we need to make.

Glen said he recently read that a number of coal miners who need retraining for other jobs are refusing to get retrained because they believe Trump’s promises to revive the coal industry so they can go back to their former jobs. While they wait for Trump’s phony promises to come true, they’ll sit in their coal towns in Appalachia and get poorer and poorer because they believed Trump. He has lied to us. Coal will not come back. Glen said we need to stop letting Trump lie to us. Instead, we need to move ahead into a better future.

Bill applauded the labor leaders who know that coal is not coming back – and who know that “jobs” and “the environment” are not really in competition with each other. For example, he praised Jeff Johnson from the Washington State Labor Council, who works for jobs and the environment and the climate. He mentioned others too.

He also said that the Backbone Campaign worked with labor organizations in several ways, including two significant conferences that supported labor and the environment and the climate. One of those occurred in Olympia a few years ago. At both of these conferences the keynote speakers were refinery workers, because they have intimate knowledge of how negligent the greedy fossil fuel industry is, and how those companies endanger workers and communities. Workers in fossil fuel industries – and workers in the railroad industry – lose friends to industrial accidents, so workers know the dangers first-hand. Workers are some of our best allies in our efforts to transition away from dirty energy.

Glen affirmed that one of the aspects of Solutionary Rail that he appreciates the most is that it is a win-win-win-win for all kinds of constituencies, for local communities, for farmers, for workers, for people who care about the environment, and on and on.

**We have a great potential to organize support from people who care about the environment and climate – and support from local communities and farmers.**

Solutionary Rail is a brilliant way to serve many constituencies, including people who care about the environment and climate. We’ve mentioned some of these benefits already, but they deserve emphasis. Solutionary Rail deserves support from people who care about the environment and the climate. Some of the places with great potential for solar power and windmills are in areas far from cities where rail lines exist or could be added. We could generate electricity from solar and wind where it is needed for rail lines and use it efficiently for Solutionary Rail, rather than lose electricity in long transmission lines.

There would be less diesel exhaust in the air.

Likewise, we should emphasize again how Solutionary Rail would be good for local communities and rural communities across our nation. Farmers could get their crops to market more efficiently instead of hauling them long distance by truck to a rail hub. Local communities could get passenger rail service again.

Bill said that in order to be good stewards of the planet, we need to localize agriculture and localize manufacturing. We need to reinvigorate local communities and rural areas. Solutionary Rail would help all of this – and it would also help restore salmon runs and protect orcas.

**Railroad workers have reasons to support Solutionary Rail.**

Bill said that the way railroads operate now – without predictable schedules and with understaffed trains – workers are stressed for time. They are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. They are often overworked and don't get enough sleep or rest. "Chronic fatigue is systemic." This creates safety hazards for rail workers and for the geographical areas and local communities through which they travel. Glen agreed and said that when railroad companies reduce the number of crew members they create hazards for the employees and for the public overall, because we drive across railroad tracks, and because we don't want trains to crash in our towns.

But the railroad companies blame accidents on employees rather than taking responsibility for how they run their systems. Railroad workers and everyone else would benefit from Solutionary Rail.

**Even truckers have reasons to support Solutionary Rail.**

Solutionary Rail would haul heavy freight by efficient railroads and reduce the amount hauled on big trucks. It might be easy to assume that truck drivers might oppose Solutionary Rail. But Bill mentioned some reasons why workers in the trucking industry might support it. He has heard horror stories from truckers who suffer from the current system.

When truck drivers are parked in concentrated areas with other trucks waiting to load or unload, they breathe a lot of diesel exhaust. Instead of the old days with well-paid Teamsters, many drivers nowadays are non-union and are underpaid. With only 10% or fewer of the drivers organized into unions, they are too weak to fight for their rights. Also, trucking companies have a hard time finding people to hire because wages and working conditions are bad.

Truck drivers want to go home every night, but long-haul truckers have to sleep in their trucks. Solutionary Rail would move long-haul freight onto trains, so trucks would be on local runs and drivers could go home every night and be well rested, so they'd be safer drivers. With more local driving, their trucks could be charged by electricity as needed.

Diesel trucks do a lot of damage where they operate. They hurt workers too. We need to decarbonize trucking. They need to not travel so far.

**We have great potential to organize support from people who want to travel by rail.**

The American people have always enjoyed traveling on passenger trains. But passenger rail service has been cut way back from our historical preference. There are good reasons why rail passengers would support Solutionary Rail.

**Why hasn't something like Solutionary Rail happened already?**

During this interview we have already discussed how Solutionary Rail would be good for the environment, the climate, local communities, farmers, and other constituencies. The case for Solutionary Rail seems obvious. Glen asked why something like Solutionary Rail has not happened already.

Bill said the railroad industry's business model is stuck, and also we're dealing with several unmovable industries. "People get into a rut, and they fail to connect the dots."



He said that many people think change happens from the top down – and so they wait for people on top to initiate change. In contrast to that, he said that tribes, railroad workers, farmers, rural communities, fence-line communities (where people choke on diesel fumes and kids have asthma) can collaborate with environmentalists and climate supporters to come together and DEMAND major changes in the infrastructure so it will better serve all of society. Together, we can force our elected officials to have some backbone and stand up to these big industries.

Glen said that when he first heard about Solutionary Rail several years ago he was excited about it, and the more he studies up on it the more excited he gets. He sees great potential. We need to organize a vibrant grassroots movement.

### What are the strategies for moving Solutionary Rail ahead?

We need to continue building the movement for Solutionary Rail until we accomplish that goal. We discussed strategies for building the movement to achieve Solutionary Rail. Bill affirmed that it requires a lot of publicity from a lot of different kinds of people to tell the story. He expressed appreciation for this TV interview. We need more people to show the short video that we showed at the beginning of this interview: <http://www.solutionaryrail.org/srvideo>

He also urged coalitions to work together. Labor groups, environmental groups, and many other constituencies and organizations can join the Solutionary Rail team. See [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) for more information and opportunities for joining.

People know that the automobile companies, oil companies and rubber tire companies killed the electric cars and electric trolleys. Let's help the public understand that electric rail is a traditional success story. We used to have much more electric railroads – and local light rail electric trolleys – in the past. Many of us know our local towns used to have them. Bill said that the rail tunnel through the Cascade Mountains near U.S. Highway 2 was electrified in 1909 – more than a century ago – in order to use electric trains rather than expose people on the train to horrible pollution from locomotives. He said **in 1928 we had 759 miles of electrified rail in Washington State.**

### What could the Washington State's 2018 legislative session do?

The Washington State Legislature will convene its 2018 session on Monday January 8. We need the Legislature's transportation committees and the overall Legislature to support a feasibility study to explore Solutionary Rail's practical aspects and help us move the project ahead. People in Washington State University and elsewhere could move ahead if the Legislature would fund the feasibility study. We need to push our legislators – especially those on a transportation committee – and we need to push Gov. Jay Inslee.

See the Proviso for Funding Feasibility WA State Legislature 2017 at <http://www.solutionaryrail.org/srproviso2017> The actual amendment to the WA State Transportation budget is now available through <http://SolutionaryRail.org/srfeasibility20170329> .

Glen suggested that other states also replicate what Bill has been urging Washington State to do – and local communities should also organize to explore how Solutionary Rail would help their respective local communities. They can identify the ways in which Solutionary Rail would help them, and then push their respective legislatures and members of Congress. We will be much more likely to succeed if people in many locations push for Solutionary Rail.

### What pitfalls, distractions and obstacles might interfere with progress toward Solutionary Rail?

Any good proposal must be aware of pitfalls, obstacles and distractions that could impair our progress. Glen asked Bill what pitfalls, obstacles or distractions he sees that might slow down our progress for Solutionary Rail. Bill said the team has worked very carefully to produce a smart proposal. He said they worked for three years to produce the book.

He said some other corridors might move more quickly than our northern corridor between Seattle and Chicago. He said that California is already trying to figure out how to de-carbonize freight. It would be OK if other regions of our nation push ahead first.

He did caution strongly against simply letting private companies figure this out, because they would let us down. We need a bottom-up process rather than let railroad companies dominate the planning. Politicians need the backbone to tell the railroad companies what the people think and want. Glen agreed that it's up to us to mobilize the constituency of the broad public interest.

Also, instead of the government merely bailing out the railroads (as with Amtrak), we need Solutionary Rail as a real solution.

### How could people get more information?

Glen urged people again to visit [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) so they can learn more and also watch the short video we showed near the beginning of this interview. That short video is at <http://www.solutionaryrail.org/srvideo> Bill said they worked very hard to produce a compelling video, and they made it easy to watch and share it. He urged people to watch it in local groups that they belong to.

They also have a very informative Power Point presentation.

Glen urged people to buy and read the book about *Solutionary Rail*. It costs \$19.95. Bill urged people to get this book into local libraries.

### How could people help?

This is a people-powered movement, so we need people to help move Solutionary Rail toward success. Bill urged local organizations to pass resolutions calling for Solutionary Rail.

People can visit [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) and look for ways to help.

Glen also suggested that people share the video of this TV interview. It's available at [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org). Simply click the "TV Programs" link and scroll down to December 2017. Next to the link for watching this interview on video, people can click the Word document link next to it and read a very thorough summary of what we said during this hour.

People can send those links to their e-mail lists, and so forth.

Bill emphasized again that the basic technology for Solutionary Rail is well proven historically. He said Toyota did not invent regenerative braking for the Prius. In 1915 General Electric built a locomotive that used it. When that locomotive went downhill it put energy back into the overhead wires. We were doing regenerative braking a century ago.

Bill said we can do this now. This is how we can get to a better future.

Glen affirmed that many constituencies would benefit from Solutionary Rail, so it is a "win-win-win-win-win" for everybody. We need everybody's help to make it happen.

Bill added that tribes are another constituency that we haven't mentioned much during this hour. Their lands have a lot of solar and wind energy potential. Historically, railroads were used as a tool of genocide. We must face that history and choose a better way forward. Solutionary Rail's new publicly owned, tax-exempt infrastructure could actually be owned by tribes. They could renegotiate better terms for rail right-of-way arrangements. The tribes could produce and sell power. Glen agreed and said tribes are located all across the country, so they could be a part of a nationwide Solutionary Rail system.

Glen affirmed that there are many exciting possibilities. It's fun to think, "What about this?" and "What about this?" and "What about this?" Solutionary Rail offers so many different kinds of solutions!

Bill expressed joy at learning so much about trains from people who were knowledgeable and passionate about trains. This has enormous potential. He said he is "catching that bug." Instead of always being against stuff, it's fun to be working for something good. He is excited about building a populist coalition for something that brings out the best in people.

Glen expressed appreciation for something that Bill had said earlier in this interview: "Our 'NO' is only as powerful as our 'YES' is compelling." Bill said, "People don't want to join a movement that's only about 'NO.' People want to be about the future." Let's challenge people to do something beautiful – something with great potential

**Closing encouragement**

Glen thanked Bill for serving as our guest during this interview.

Glen also said that for nearly 31 years this TV series has addressed many serious problems. We always end by recommending solutions. This past hour has spent less time on the problems, and we have devoted nearly all of the hour promoting a very positive solution.

Solutionary Rail would be good for our environment, good for our climate, good for local communities, good for several kinds of workers, good for rail passengers, and good in other ways.

I enthusiastically support Solutionary Rail. Please visit its website, [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) to learn more about it and find out how you can help to accomplish it.

You can watch the video we showed at the beginning of this interview. Watch [www.solutionaryrail.org/s r v i d e o](http://www.solutionaryrail.org/s r v i d e o)

You can buy the *Solutionary Rail* book for \$19.95.

You can help spread the word about this great progressive solution to several problems.

Olympia FOR's TV series ends with this program.

**A very similar new TV series – “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” – will begin in January 2018.**

Glen closed this program by saying that for almost **31 years** – since February **1987** – he has produced and hosted approximately **360** TV programs for the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation. This December 2017 TV program is the last in this decades-long series.

Starting in January 2018 he will produce and host a similar series under a different name and with a different looking set. The format and the range of issues will remain the same as the series you’ve been watching over the years, and so will the dates and times when the new program series will air on TCTV cable channel 22 in Thurston County.

**The new program series will be called “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives.”** We’ll post the programs also on the new blog that will be ready by mid-December 2017 with the same name, [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). Look at that blog for much information about a wide range of issues related to peace, nonviolence, social justice, economics, the environment, and other vital issues.

So look for the TV program **“Glen’s Parallax Perspectives”** starting in January 2018 – and visit Glen’s new blog [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) starting by mid-December.

About 170 of the Olympia FOR’s previous programs will remain on our website. Visit [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org), click “TV Programs,” and scroll down through the chronological list. Click the title of the program you want to watch, and/or click the link next to that to read a thorough summary of what we said during that interview.

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence by contacting the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation at (360) 491-9093 or [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)

**We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.  
We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.  
The world needs you! You can help!**