During 2019 my local newspaper, [www.TheOlympian.com](http://www.TheOlympian.com), authorized me to write five Op-Eds of up to 750 words each. My November 2019 article explained and strongly supported Solutionary Rail. Here is the Op-Ed they published:

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**Solutionary Rail Is Good for Climate, Workers, Communities**

It’s rare to find a creative proposal that solves many problems at the same time. I’m enthusiastic about Solutionary Rail, [**www.solutionaryrail.org**](https://www.solutionaryrail.org/tctv2017). It would electrify our railroads and significantly reduce fossil fuel use and air pollution. It would protect our environment, climate, and public health. It would create jobs and help local communities – including seaport areas, transportation hubs, cities, freeways, and rural areas.

Solutionary Rail’s bold, systemic changes would be better than merely converting to electric cars and trucks. Moving freight now involves ocean-going ships, railroads, trucks, workers and local communities. Solutionary Rail would provide cost-effective infrastructure for localizing our economies and moving people and goods more efficiently.

Railroads used to be the main transportation system for freight and passengers, but freeways and airplanes displaced trains. Trains did not keep up with modern technology. Years ago, trains served small communities, but now their passenger and freight stations are shut down. Solutionary Rail would allow better service to rural areas and help revive them.

Merely electrifying vehicles would not ease traffic congestion, but shifting freight from trucks to trains would. Also, trucks wear out our roads and highways more than their fuel taxes pay for, so the rest of us end up subsidizing trucks.

Moving freight long distances on trucks is horrible for the environment. We should use trucks only for shorter distances and use trains for long-distance shipping. We could save 2/3 of the energy by transporting on rails instead of highways. We can’t afford to continue letting trucks burn diesel, destroy our roadways, and pollute our communities. Efficient trains would be better for the environment and climate.

To decarbonize trucking, we should use trucks only for less than 150 miles per day so they could be electrified. Solutionary Rail provides a very practical and cost-effective way to electrify trains.

In less than four minutes a video at this link -- [**www.solutionaryrail.org/video**](https://www.solutionaryrail.org/video) -- makes a clear and compelling case.

Solutionary Rail would be good for workers at railroads, trucks and warehouses. Most railroad workers do not have regular work schedules but are on-call 24 hours a day, causing chronic fatigue and safety problems for workers and wherever trains travel. Workers in railroads, trucks and warehouses – and people who live nearby – must breathe diesel fumes. Electrification would reduce health problems.

Solutionary Rail would be good for environmentalists, workers, and all of us. The Solutionary Rail movement is bringing railroad workers, impacted communities and environmentalists together to create win-win-win solutions for more jobs, safer jobs, safer communities, and stronger local economies.

Let’s electrify trains with overhead power lines over their existing tracks. Also, electric locomotives could use regenerative braking to return electrical power to the electrical grid, further increasing their efficiency.

The U.S. could generate much solar and wind energy to power the trains. Also, additional high voltage direct current power lines could be installed above those powering the trains. These additional lines could transmit clean alternative energy to customers nationwide, including areas with less sunlight or wind. Local communities and tribes could make money by generating this solar and wind power and selling it to customers nationwide.

**Solutionary Rail would be so efficient that it would** attract more freight and passengers, allowing railroads to better serve urban, rural, small town, and tribal economies. It would reduce air pollution in **trackside communities and protect our environment and climate.**

Solutionary Rail would be far more cost-effective and far quicker to accomplish than horribly expensive, disruptive “bullet trains,” which would be unnecessary, because Solutionary Rail’s existing rail lines could easily go 110-124 mph with only minor improvements to some stretches of track on the existing right-of-way. In contrast,” bullet trains” would need to buy horribly expensive new rights-of-way and bog down in many years of legal fights. Rail companies already have routes and easements nationwide, so we could electrify them fairly quickly and economically. Also, “bullet trains” for passengers would not solve the problems of big trucks, freeway congestion, and air pollution. Solutionary Rail would solve those problems.

Solutionary Rail would be very compatible with the Green New Deal, because it provides solutions for the climate, workers, and local communities.

Solutionary Rail’s website, [**www.solutionaryrail.org**](https://www.solutionaryrail.org/tctv2017), provides much information, including videos at the home-page’s “In the Press” tab and a fascinating, informative book.

Let’s urge the state and federal Departments of Transportation – and our U.S. Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell – and our U.S. Representative Denny Heck – and our state legislators Sam Hunt, Beth Doglio and Laurie Dolan to support Solutionary Rail.

**745** words, excluding the headline and the author info below:

Glen Anderson is a lifelong Puget Sound resident (in Lacey since 1975), with a long career in State government. Since the late 1960s he has devoted his life to working as a volunteer for peace, nonviolence, social justice, and many progressive issues. He writes, speaks, and conducts workshops on a wide variety of topics. His multi-issue blog is [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)