

August 2010

Central Japan Railway Workers' Union (JRCU)

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

JR Central's Plan to Begin Operating the Chuo Shinkansen Line (SCMAGLEV) in 2027

Why Do We Oppose the Plan?

- * No “prior assessment” or nationwide debate has taken place inside or out of the company. Consequently, no consensus has been formed among the people.
- * It would be arrogant and irresponsible for the debt-laden JR Central to build and operate the Chuo Shinkansen line, a national project, as this would only add further to its debt burden.
- * There are many unknowns concerning the risks to human health and the environment by powerful electromagnetic fields.
- * JR Central has failed to make clear its social mission, safety and environmental policies, and has thus failed to fulfill its responsibility.
- * JR Central will be at high risk of bankruptcy, potentially leading to further unemployment problems for workers in the company and its affiliated firms.

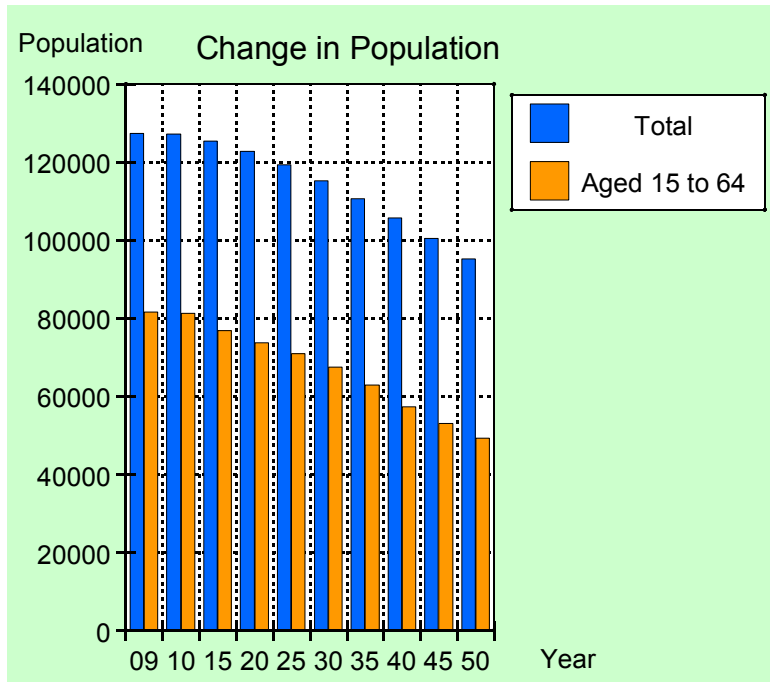
Problematic Points. . .

1 . Is There Really a Need for Greater Speed?

Currently, the Nozomi Shinkansen takes approximately an hour and 40 minutes to go from Tokyo to Nagoya. JR Central insists there is a need for a further reduction in journey time. Is there really dissatisfaction, however, with the speed of the Shinkansen? A survey conducted by the Kofu General Office of *Asahi Shimbun* regarding the Maglev Shinkansen route last year showed that more than half (56.8%) of the respondents said, “The Maglev Shinkansen is not necessary.” It seems unlikely that the public desires greater speed in transport.

2. Has Carrying Capacity Really Reached a Critical Limit?

Traffic volume on the Tokaido Shinkansen has been nearly flat since 1991. With the current recession, in fact, the volume has actually dropped by approximately 10%. Outside of the rush hours, there are plenty of empty seats on the Tokaido Shinkansen, and it is hard to believe that its carrying capacity has reached a critical limit. In the years to come, the falling birthrate will lead to a dwindling population. The number of people in the 15-64 age



group, who use the Shinkansen most frequently, may decrease by nearly 13% by 2025, when the Maglev Shinkansen is scheduled to commence operations. Moreover, by the year 2045, when JR Central plans to extend the route to Osaka, the number is projected to have dropped by almost 35%! JR Central is proceeding with its plan on the assumption that the traffic volume of the Tokaido Shinkansen will rise steadily.

3. Have Concrete Measures Been Adopted against the Serious Health Hazard of Electromagnetic Fields?

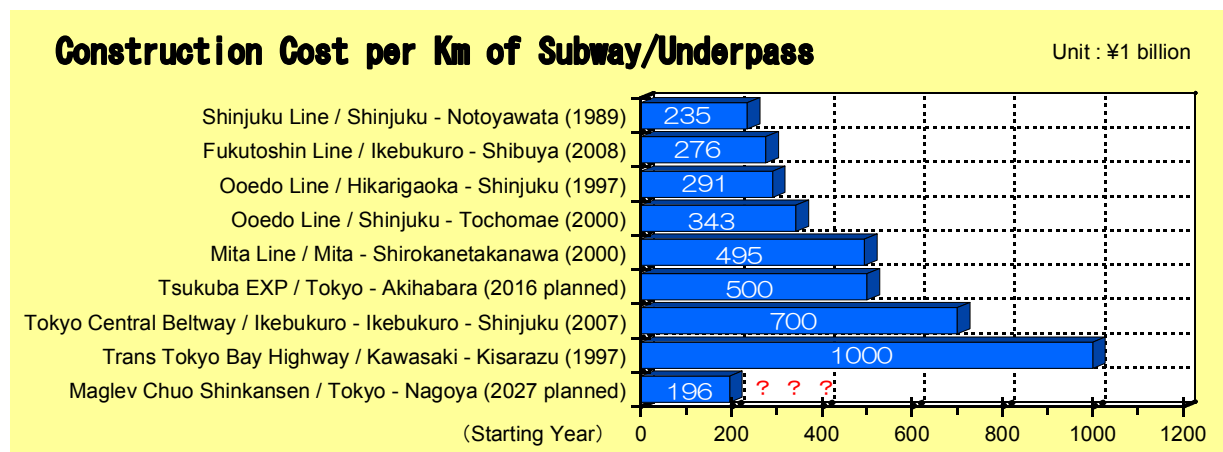
There is concern that the intensity of the magnetic fields generated by the maglev systems could reach 6,000~40,000mG on the floor of the Shinkansen. A fact sheet on electromagnetic fields from power equipment released in 2001 by the IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer), a subordinate agency of the WHO, stated, "In a population exposed to average magnetic fields in excess of 4mG, twice as many children might develop leukemia compared to a population with lower exposures." It has also been reported that IH rice cookers have sent improper signals to cardiac pacemakers. In addition, there is a case where a female teaching assistant at Jikei University School of Medicine contracted cancer after being exposed to strong electromagnetic fields while doing animal experiments. Some countries have enacted age limits on the use of mobile phones. Regulations on electromagnetic fields / electromagnetic exposure are being strengthened across the world.

Despite these growing suspicions, what will happen when we are exposed to these much stronger fields for 40 minutes at a time? Has technology for preventing electromagnetic exposure been established? JR Central insists, "The electromagnetic fields are far weaker than the WHO standards," but that statement is baseless.

4 . Will 7.5 Trillion Yen Really be Sufficient?

According to JR Central's tentative calculation, the construction cost for the Maglev Shinkansen using the most direct route (plan C) will be nearly 4.8 trillion yen. Dividing the total construction cost by the distance after deducting the test line, this amounts to 19.6 billion yen per kilometer.

Plans call for the Maglev Shinkansen to run through deep tunnels in urban areas, and 80% of the track will be laid underground. Considering the construction costs of recent expressways and subways, the tentative calculation by JR Central can only be described as super-optimistic.



5 . No Prospect for the Redemption of Long-Term Loans

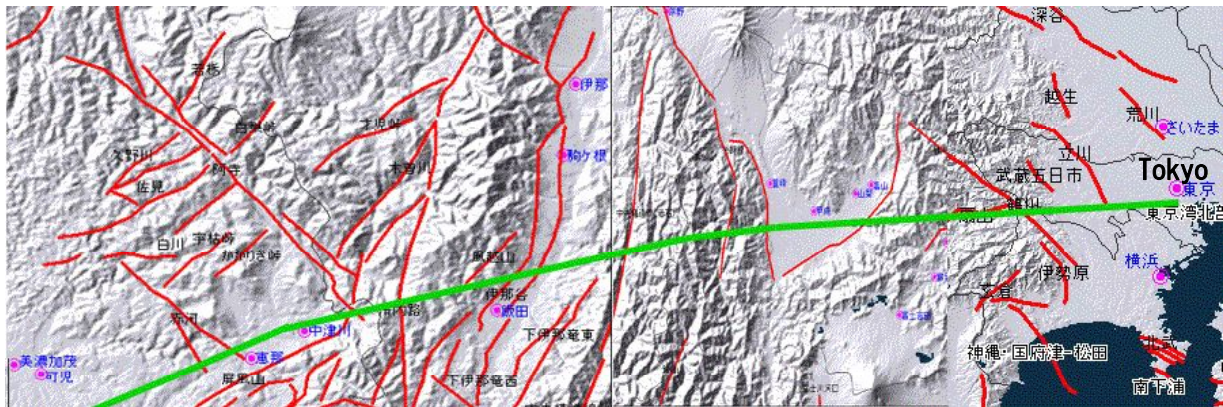
JR Central's outstanding loans are currently close to 3.2 trillion yen. The company repaid nearly 2.2 trillion yen during the 18 years between 1991 and 2009. It will take a further 26 years to repay the whole sum at this pace. In order to carry out the Maglev Shinkansen project, the company will have to redeem its debt by 2016. The fact that it pushed back the schedule for the start of operations of the Maglev Shinkansen from 2025 to 2027 seems to be not totally unrelated to its financial difficulties. JR Central is in an extremely delicate situation as a result of its enormous debts. It was only recently that Japan Airlines collapsed, saddled with debts of 2.3 trillion yen. JR Central has the potential to become another JAL.

6 . The Maglev Shinkansen: The Only Countermeasure for the Aging Tokaido Shinkansen?

It would be possible to conduct major repair work on the aging Tokaido Shinkansen without relying on the Maglev Shinkansen project. For example, inventive construction methods could be designed, additional limited express trains could be operated on the Tokaido Main Line to carry passengers, or sections of track could be put out of service for a half a day or so at a time for intensive work.

The danger of earthquakes has been put forward as one reason to support the Maglev

Shinkansen. However, the planned construction route runs over unstable ground and cuts through the Median Tectonic Line, an area with many faults where major earthquakes are expected at any time. There is no evidence to support the contention that, “the Maglev Shinkansen is an earthquake-proof railway system.” On the contrary, the damage by an earthquake could be even worse than for other trains, given the complexity of its systems.



Red lines: active faults, Green line: new route C

Give Us Your Thoughts on JR Central's Vision for the SCMAGLEV Shinkansen!

JR Central Was Unable to Justify Its Demand Projections at the Transport Policy Council

The third meeting of the Transport Policy Council's subcommittee on the Chuo Shinkansen was held on May 10, and it featured a public hearing by JR Central. In discussing estimated profits, JR Central stated, “Profits are expected to rise by 5% at the time of initial opening of the Nagoya route, and after that to continue increasing by 10% annually for the following decade. At the time the line is extended to Osaka, the profits will increase by a further 15%.”

Subcommittee members asked JR Central about their rationale for believing that the demand for the Maglev Shinkansen would increase even when it was clear that Japan had an aging population with a falling birthrate, why they estimated that demand would increase by 3% despite the fact that there were currently no flights between Tokyo and Nagoya due to the lack of demand, and to explain why passengers were expected to move from other transportation means such as express buses to the Maglev Shinkansen despite the higher costs. JR Central answered, “We have yet to examine those issues,” meaning that the company hadn't even considered conducting research. Unless the company can show a clear basis for its demand projections, we can only assume it will continue along the road toward bankruptcy.

Moreover, in response to the request, “The company should thoroughly discuss the issue

with working people, especially its union members,” the company said, “This is a matter that concerns our employees, and we are encouraging discussions and providing them with progress reports.” As for the union’s demands, no bargaining has yet been held. JR Central thus made false reports to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

Shinkansen and Maglev Systems used to Strengthen Japan-US Military Alliance!

As part of its effort to sell Maglev and Shinkansen systems, JR Central established two consulting companies in the US. Among the CEOs of these firms are former officials from the US Department of Defense. JR Central Chairman Yoshiyuki Kasai wrote in the July 2010 issue of *Bungeishunju* (a monthly journal), that “The adoption of JR Central’s maglev system as a high speed railway will become a symbol of the stability of the Japan-US alliance.” railway will become a symbol to stabilize the Japan-US alliance.”

Mr. Kasai is looking for markets for the Shinkansen and maglev systems in the US, not as a service for passengers but based on military ambitions. This is absolutely unacceptable.

We appreciate your input!

For more information, please visit our website.

Central Japan Railway Workers’ Union (JRCU)

101 Sannoh Heights, 4-21-5 Sannoh, Ota-ku, Tokyo

143-0023 Japan

TEL +81-3-5743-2562 FAX +81-3-5743-2570

<http://www.geocities.jp/jrtoukairou/>

Email jrtoukairou@yahoo.co.jp