

WisDems: Says thanks to Kleefisch & Walker, trains meant for Wisconsin end up in Nigeria

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MADISON, Wis. — More than a decade after Rebecca Kleefisch and Scott Walker derailed a common sense plan for high-speed passenger rail in Wisconsin, the trains that would have been used to connect communities in Wisconsin to Chicago and beyond are being shipped out of the country to Nigeria.

A high-speed train route through Wisconsin would have made travel much smoother for Wisconsinites, created thousands of jobs, and generated hundreds of millions of dollars in economic opportunities, but Kleefisch and Walker killed the plan after their election in 2010 because of petty political fighting. Kleefisch even [tweeted](#) that she would rather buy 266,667 minivans than follow through on the train plan.

Because of Kleefisch and Walker's job-killing decision, the rail funding was ultimately directed to other states, hard-working taxpayers were still forced to pay \$50 million in a legal settlement, and Wisconsin lost out on unprecedented economic opportunities. Much like their [botched Foxconn deal](#), Wisconsinites are still dealing with the fallout from Kleefisch and Walker's disastrous leadership.

WPR: [Trains intended for unbuilt Milwaukee-Madison high-speed rail line going to Nigeria](#)

Two trains originally intended for a high-speed rail line to connect Madison and Milwaukee are headed for Nigeria. The governor of that country's Lagos State is coming to Milwaukee Tuesday to purchase the unused trains.

According to a press release, the trains are set to become part of West Africa's first operational metro system.

At a public event at the Milwaukee facilities of Spanish train manufacturer Talgo, acting Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson will welcome Lagos State Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

It's the latest turn in a decade-long saga revolving around high-speed rail, which Wisconsin Public Radio previously covered in the 2019 podcast series *Derailed*.

In 2009, Wisconsin's then-Gov. Jim Doyle, a Democrat, announced a deal with Talgo for two new trains to be built in the state and used for a high-speed rail line between Milwaukee and Madison. In the same year, Wisconsin was awarded \$810 million for the project in a federal stimulus bill.

The plans died off after Republican Scott Walker became governor. But by 2012, Talgo had built the trains, and sent an invoice to the state for them. Later that year, Talgo terminated the contract and sued the state, kicking off a court dispute that lasted almost three years.

Ultimately, under the terms of a settlement between Wisconsin and Talgo, the state paid the company a total of \$50 million for the trains, which remained under the

company's ownership