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November 16, 2022

Dr. Shawn Wilson, Secretary
Louisiana Department of Transportation
and Development
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

RE: Support for the I-20 Corridor proposed I-20 Rail Corridor Service

Dr. Wilson,

I write on behalf of the City of Anniston in support of the Southern Rail Commission's proposal for passenger rail along the I-20 Corridor. This proposed service will connect our communities in and around Anniston, Birmingham, and Tuscaloosa to new economies in central Mississippi, northern Louisiana, and the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex by splitting the existing Crescent line service at Meridian, Mississippi and sending the overnight cars to Dallas. This service would connect the major two economic centers of the southeast - Dallas and Atlanta - giving Alabama residents to both. If this service is implemented, residents of central Alabama will gain the ability to travel to New Orleans, Dallas and all the stops between Alabama and those cities.

These connections will provide the residents of Anniston and Calhoun County and its surrounding communities with access to jobs and services that are currently only accessible by long-distance car drives. I-20 occupies a critical economic corridor through the deep south, so connecting my residents to it through more modes of transportation is a priority for my administration.

I therefore request that you support Shreveport/Bossier City, Ruston, and Monroe in expeditiously planning and constructing their stations along the I-20 corridor. These stations, some of the last pieces of infrastructure needed for I-20 service to begin, would result in significant economic benefits for both our states, as Louisianans and Alabamans will be able to more easily access all that both states have to offer, in addition to all the jobs and services made newly available in Mississippi and Texas.

In addition, I appreciate your work to fund a planning study to determine more in-depth infrastructure needs along this route. I look forward to those needs being identified and addressed in order to begin passenger rail service along the I-20 corridor as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration,


Jack Draper
Mayor

