



STATE OF ALABAMA

May 17, 2018

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

As Governor of the State of Alabama, I am writing in support of the Southern Rail Commission's (SRC) efforts to secure federal funding from the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program as well as the Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Grants Program. I believe that restoring passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast is an issue that is worth pursuing with further analysis and studies. I support these applications and always search for avenues to partner with our neighboring states to further the economic recovery of the Gulf Coast region.

As you may know, the Gulf Coast had passenger rail service from 1894 to 2005. However, because of the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina, the long-distance Amtrak train between New Orleans and Orlando was suspended indefinitely. The Gulf region has gone without any passenger rail service since.

The governors of Mississippi, Louisiana and I are members of the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) through our appointed designees. The SRC is the only multi-state rail compact created by the U.S. Congress. Since its creation in 1982, the SRC has worked to expand passenger rail service across the South, and for the past five years this has included restoring rail service along the Gulf Coast.

Through the FAST Act of 2015, our Gulf Coast congressional delegation and others created the Gulf Coast Working Group (GCWG) to determine a path forward for passenger rail service in the region. The group included the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Amtrak, the host railroad, SRC, elected officials and business leaders from the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The GCWG final report, released on July 17, 2017, identified as one of its preferred service options a daily regional business train, making two round trips a day between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama that also links Mississippi coastal cities. The report identified the capital costs and operating costs to restore this level of service and also identified potential sources of federal funding to cover the projected costs of restoration. The first segment of a daily regional business train service recommended to be restored would be

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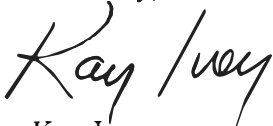
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between New Orleans to Mobile, with potential future segments to Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Atmore, Alabama. This regional service will connect a coastal region of more than 4 million residents, with a tourism economy supported by more than 10 million visitors a year, an energy economy that provides more than 60 percent of the nation's petroleum-based exploration and production, three of the busiest ports in the U.S. and a growing aerospace, maritime, and military economy.

Ever since the suspension of passenger rail service in 2005, the State of Alabama and its citizens have looked for ways to effectively restore passenger service along the Gulf Coast. Federal assistance would go a long way toward making that dream a reality. Therefore, I respectfully request your favorable consideration of this multi-state endeavor to bring back passenger rail service to the Gulf Coast. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Ivey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kay Ivey
Governor