



November 18, 2022

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

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

Dear Dr. Wilson:

I am writing to express my full endorsement of the Southern Rail Commission's proposal for passenger rail along the I-20 Corridor. This proposed service will connect our region which will facilitate economic development. RPCGB has been a strong proponent of increased passenger rail in the state of Alabama. We have conducted multiple rail studies to showed strong support for the expansion of service.

The increase in economic opportunities for the region would help many of our disadvantaged communities would benefit Birmingham. Our region has a population of approximately 898,000 people and contains metropolitan areas and rural areas, with 104 tracts identified as HDCs, 84 as environ-mentally disadvantaged, and 29 Opportunity Zones. These areas would be improved with the proposed expansion of rail service.

Birmingham has a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that began service in September 2022 so there will be transportation options for those that either come or leave Birmingham. With the new Protective Stadium that open this pass year is yet another destination opportunity for those that would use the new service. The Birmingham region is ready for additional travel options for those that want to visit our region. I fully support the expansion of service to our region along the 1-20 Corridor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Charles E. Ball'.

Charles E. Ball, AICP
Executive Director