



TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
INDIAN RIVER - ST. LUCIE - MARTIN - PALM BEACH

December 3, 2012

Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
Attn: Sydney Schneir

Subject: Letter of Support for the All Aboard Florida Passenger Rail Project

Dear Ms. Schneir:

Council has reviewed the Environmental Assessment and Section 4(F) Evaluation for the All Aboard Florida Passenger Rail Project (West Palm Beach to Miami, Florida), dated October 31, 2012, prepared by All Aboard Florida. The purpose of the project is to establish intercity passenger rail service between West Palm Beach and Miami utilizing the existing Florida East Coast (FEC) rail corridor, including the installation of a second railroad track, necessary infrastructure improvements, and the construction of three new passenger rail stations in downtown Miami, downtown Fort Lauderdale, and downtown West Palm Beach. The Assessment is comprehensive, thorough, and complete in its analysis of the improvements necessary to enable the construction of the proposed service.

The restoration of passenger rail service on the FEC rail corridor has been a top priority of the Treasure Coast Region for decades. The original FEC rail line and its stations are the key organizing element for Florida's historic development pattern along its east coast. Each of the historic stations became a town center for the dozens of small and large cities that evolved along the corridor. Since passenger rail service was disbanded in 1968, automobiles and an expanding roadway network has characterized the coast, contributing to inefficient, sprawling development patterns in the absence of multi-modal alternatives. The All Aboard Florida Passenger Rail project, recently proposed by Florida East Coast Industries, presents a much needed alternative for today's transportation network.

The project is consistent with Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plan, and several key goals and strategies are noted accordingly. The project will advance progress to reduce the Region's vulnerability for fuel price increases and conversely reinforce a pattern of development that reduces dependency on the automobile, encourages transit, and reduces the overall use of fossil fuels (Future of the Region, Goal 9.1 and Policy 9.1.1.1). The project will also help encourage compact, mixed-use development and redevelopment that enhances the preferred form of development and helps contain suburban sprawl, as noted in the Future of the Region, Goal 15.1 and Policy 15.1.3.3. The "All Aboard Florida" project will also help advance the Region

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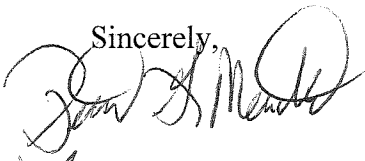
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towards a balanced and integrated transportation system (Transportation Goal 7.1), with infrastructure to encourage a higher density and intensity of development within core downtown areas (Policy 7.1.2.3). As the project proceeds, Council notes the need for continued coordination with local governments and residents regarding a variety of local issues, including municipal interest in the construction of quiet zones, potential impacts to locally-funded infrastructure improvements (such as parking and landscaping) constructed by local governments in and along the rail corridor, and the maintenance of mobility and street networks around proposed station areas.

The All Aboard Florida project will also help advance the long-range plans of the Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Martin County MPO, and St Lucie Transportation Planning Organization. In addition, the passenger rail initiative is consistent with Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS Plan.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council strongly supports the expansion of passenger rail in the Region, and the All Aboard Florida Passenger Rail project represents a tremendous opportunity to enhance the sustainability of the Region with premium transit service.

Sincerely,



for  
Michael J. Busha, AICP  
Executive Director

cc: Martin A. Peate, AICP, URS Corporation