



MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Bill Nelson, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Marco Rubio, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Ted Deutch, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Lois Frankel, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Alcee Hastings, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Patrick Murphy, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Bill Posey, U.S. House of Representatives

From: Michael J. Busha, AICP
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MJB', is placed to the right of the 'From:' line.

Date: March 10, 2014

Subject: All Aboard Florida

The All Aboard Florida (AAF) project, proposed by Florida East Coast Industries (FECI), has been the subject of extensive Council and local government discussion since its announcement in May 2012. The reintroduction of passenger rail service on the Florida East Coast rail corridor has been a long-standing Council priority and has the potential for improved mobility and varied economic and environmental benefits. However, the service as currently proposed concentrates public benefits in communities where stations are planned (West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Orlando), but it imposes costs and impacts to all local governments along the corridor. In addition, cargo-related train traffic is expected to increase with proposed rail corridor and seaport capacity improvements, creating further local and regional impacts. A better balance of shared benefits and reduced costs is necessary to protect all local governments and citizens in the Treasure Coast Region.

There are several opportunities for the Congressional Delegation to help mitigate project impacts and more fairly distribute public benefits throughout the Region. These include:

- **Federal Funding for Quiet Zone Improvements**

The Congressional Delegation should assist in securing a TIGER grant and other Federal appropriations for local governments to establish quiet zones, with safe pedestrian pathways, at all grade crossings along the AAF route. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) should be compelled to require FECI to install the highest degree of safety infrastructure at all grade crossings to enable the establishment of

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quiet zones at the lowest possible cost to state and local governments. The FRA should also provide a clear definition of what constitutes a “sealed corridor” along the “Class Six” segment of the railway from approximately Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard in Palm Beach County north to State Road 528 in Brevard County.

- **Stations and Stops in Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River Counties**
The Congressional Delegation should direct Amtrak to immediately advance the Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project, which is already funded in the Florida Department of Transportation Five-Year Work Program. This would provide stations in Stuart, Fort Pierce, and Vero Beach, which should be designed to also accommodate AAF trains. FECI should be compelled to add limited AAF service stops in these communities in the first phase of service.
- **Mitigating Railroad Bridge and Navigation Conflicts**
The Congressional Delegation should direct the U.S. Coast Guard to initiate amendments to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR § 117.299 and CFR §117.317) to limit, for example, railroad bridge closures at the Loxahatchee and St. Lucie rivers to not more than fifteen minutes per half-hour. FECI should further be required to modernize both bridges with upgraded bridge machinery and provide bridge-tenders during weekends and holidays to increase safety and public access, and reduce navigation delays.
- **Reallocation of Freight to the CSX Rail Corridor**
The Congressional Delegation should compel FECI to execute a freight rationalization program in conjunction with the AAF project to shift long-distance freight trains away from the FEC’s coastal route and onto the CSX’s inland route to reduce impacts on local communities and bridge closures.
- **Broadband Access to Public and Select Not-for-Profit Institutions at a Discounted Rate**
The Congressional Delegation should compel FECI’s telecommunications division (Parallel Infrastructure) to establish a discounted rate for broadband access by local governments and agencies, educational systems including colleges and universities, hospitals, and not-for-profit biomedical institutions.
- **Establish a Reasonable, Consistent, and Predictable Rate Structure for Municipal Grade Crossings**
The Congressional Delegation should compel FECI to establish standardized agreements with a reasonable and consistent long-term rate structure to provide greater certainty about the annual and periodic costs to local governments and public authorities for maintaining FEC rail corridor grade crossings.

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- **Resolving Commuter Railroad Access Fees and Terms**

The Congressional Delegation should compel FECI to establish reasonable railroad access fees and terms for future commuter rail service in Southeast Florida, as part of FECI's pending request for a Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Fund loan.

These actions will help bring balance to what has become an increasingly imbalanced All Aboard Florida proposal. Council will continue to communicate with FECI and state, federal and local agencies regarding the project. These issues should be given full consideration during preparation of the forthcoming Environmental Impact Statement. Council stands ready to review this document in cooperation with local governments in the Region.

Thank you for taking a leadership role to champion these actions on behalf of the 54 local governments and 1.9 million citizens of the Treasure Coast Region.

cc: Peter O'Bryan, Chairman, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
Treasure Coast Local Governments
Treasure Coast MPO/TPOs
Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities
Palm Beach League of Cities
Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments