

TOWN OF JUPITER ISLAND

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March 24, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives, District 18
1517 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Murphy:

All Aboard Florida

The Town of Jupiter Island appreciates the opportunity to respond to your request regarding the impacts All Aboard Florida will have on Jupiter Island and the Treasure Coast. Recently, Mr. Rusty Roberts, representing All Aboard Florida, made a presentation to our Town Commission. Unfortunately, we are still left with more questions and concerns than answers. The Town empathizes with and supports the concerns related to All Aboard Florida already expressed by others on the Treasure Coast, such as the Martin County Board of Commissioners and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

As you know, the Town of Jupiter Island is located on a barrier island with only one northern roadway access to the mainland – Bridge Road, which the Florida East Coast (FEC) rail track crosses less than one-half mile from the bridge access to the Island.

Safety: Within a couple of hundred feet of the rail crossing are a daycare center, two elementary schools, a high school and a college where traffic backups and limited parking minimize mobility for parents to drop off their children at the schools. Many parents must park or drop off their children along Dixie Highway west of the tracks, and they walk across the highway and the tracks to get to and from their school. The proposed passenger rail and the expectation of increased freight trains will compound the issue and create additional safety concerns for the children and adults alike. How this will be handled has not been addressed.

Traffic: There are currently three stop lights on Bridge Road between U.S. Highway 1 and Gomez Avenue, a distance about one-half mile, including one at Dixie Highway where it intersects along the FEC track. During train crossings, traffic already backs up along Bridge Road, hindering access from Dixie Highway, Gomez and other intersecting side streets. Any increase in train traffic when coupled with bridge traffic less than a half-mile away will only exacerbate the traffic backups.

Emergency Response: Another major concern is the potential affect on response times of fire, police and emergency personnel and vehicles required to cross the tracks. Due to the locations of the fire and EMT stations, the current traffic backups, the schools and the way the rail and the roadways are configured, the response to an emergency may be severely hindered by the increased rail traffic.

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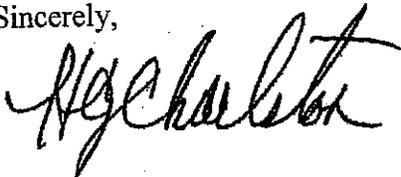
Noise: Increased passenger rail and additional freight equals additional noise. Increased noise pollution will negatively affect the quality of life local residents currently enjoy, and the impact of noise will have a direct impact on property values. If most of the rail passengers are tourists, as was presented, are you willing to sacrifice the property values and quality of life for local residents without any direct benefit?

Funding: Mitigating the above concerns comes at a cost. Who will be responsible for funding the cost of upgrading the crossings, creating "Quiet Zones" or relocating utility crossings? Is it fair to negatively impact the lives of local residents and then make them pay financially for it as well?

Quality of Life: Jupiter Island residents pride themselves on the quality of life that this tranquil island provides away from the hustle and bustle of the metropolitan areas of south Florida. The Town's quiet beauty and the seclusion are what keep the property values among the highest in the county.

Thank you for taking the opportunity to hear and voice our concerns and impacts that All Aboard Florida may have on the residents of Jupiter Island as well as the local residents of Hobe Sound and the Treasure Coast. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and hope you can formulate and implement solutions to benefit all residents of Florida, both locally and regionally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. G. Charlston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harry G. Charlston
Mayor