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April 1, 2021

Ms. Allison Davis
Director, Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Reference: Completion of Amtrak passenger service / freight interoperability study.

Dear Ms. Davis:

The Hancock County Port & Harbor Commission (HCPHC) owns and operates the Port Bienville Railroad, along with the Port Bienville Industrial Park, maritime facilities and the Stennis International Airport in Hancock County, Mississippi. The Commission is also the lead economic development agency for Hancock County. The Port Bienville Railroad (PBVR) is a Class III short line providing switching and storage services for nine (9) tenants in our industrial park. CSX is our primary transportation partner, and PBVR interchanges with CSX six (6) days per week.

We understand that Amtrak is proceeding with plans to add four (4) trains per day onto CSX's single-track line along the Gulf Coast. We further understand that studies have been concluded as to the benefits of passenger service resuming but no study has been completed related to the impact on freight service along this corridor.

The freight study would answer very important questions regarding our service. Those questions include but are not limited to:

- How much throughput capacity will passenger service need vs freight service and how can both operate on a single-track mainline between Port Bienville Railroad and Gentilly Yard in New Orleans?
- How will operational changes and increased train traffic affect maritime / barge traffic at the Pearl River and Rigolets Pass bridges?
- What affects (increase/decrease) will the new rail passenger service have on the roadway system?
- What infrastructure may be needed to maintain safety and efficiencies along the Gulf Coast?

HCPHC is not fundamentally against this passenger rail project. There is a path forward for both transportation systems to work without negatively affecting one another, but it relies on data. I respectfully ask the Surface Transportation Board to require that the freight modeling study be completed before allowing this project to move forward.

Respectfully,



William Cotter
Chief Executive Officer – HCPHC

Copy: Parties of Record

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 5th day of April, 2021, a copy of the foregoing Letter was served by email or U.S. mail on the service list for Finance Docket No. 36496.

/s/ William Cotter
William Cotter
Chief Executive Officer
Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission