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STRATEGIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Surface Transportation Board

Re: Support of Passenger Rail in Florida

Dear STB Board:

I write in support of Support the Gulf Coast Service expansion and would like to participate in the Surface Transportation Board public hearing on February 15 regarding Docket No. FD 36496. I am a passenger rail supporter and request 2-3 minutes at that hearing.

I support the planned expansion of Amtrak service from New Orleans, Louisiana to Mobile, Alabama (Gulf Coast Service). This was an existing route for Amtrak prior to Hurricane Katrina, which severely damaged the infrastructure, and now is an opportunity to re-establish service from the west coast to Florida.

This will be an economic driver for the Gulf Coast communities served by the expansion that will create jobs and benefit the tourism, retail, and restaurant industries along the Gulf Coast. Gulf Coast Service will provide access to equitable transportation between Mobile and New Orleans.

I supported this issue while serving as President & CEO of Associated Industries of Florida (AIF), which is known as "The Voice of Florida Business." I've been an outspoken advocate on transportation issues and I'm happy to see our Sunshine State is continuing to lead the nation in the right direction.

Please let me know if you have any questions and I hope you'll take this into consideration as we look to improve our passenger rail here in Florida. I am,

Sincerely,

Barney Bishop III
President and CEO