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To members of the Surface Transportation Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to enthusiastically state my community's continuing support for Amtrak to operate daily passenger rail service between New Orleans and Mobile.

For years, people along our Gulf Coast have heard about passenger rail, but, unfortunately, it was not offered in our community. The daily service is something that Biloxi, our neighboring cities and the Southern Rail Commission have advocated for years. This is about economic growth and tourism development across this region.

Just a few years ago, we saw an example of what could be with the Amtrak Inspection Tour. Thousands of people turned out a weekday to show support at stops all along the Coast. Today, we are almost across the finish line.

I ask that the STB protect Amtrak's rights to use freight railroad tracks to support service in our area to connect us to the rest of the country. The Southern Rail Commission and other state or regional groups look to partner with Amtrak to deliver safe, reliable and relevant service and we need the STB to bring this protracted process to a close.

In Biloxi, we're well-positioned. Our downtown Biloxi Transit Center has the waiting area, the ticket windows, the parking spaces, the cab service, thousands of hotel rooms and other amenities a short drive or walk away. We knew this day would come, and it's getting closer every day. In fact, it's here. Please help make it happen.

Sincerely,

Andrew "FoFo" Gilich
Mayor of Biloxi