



**BILL LEE**  
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Cynthia T. Brown  
Chief of the Section of Administration  
Office of Proceedings  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20423

Re: Gulf Coast Passenger Service Between New Orleans and Mobile  
STB Finance Docket No. 36496

Dear Surface Transportation Board Members:

I am writing to express my concerns about the Board's intent to explore Amtrak's use of freight tracks for a Gulf Coast passenger rail service operating between New Orleans, Louisiana and Mobile, Alabama.

The Board's decision is ill timed and has serious implications for our state and our country. As the American supply chain faces significant strain, we do not support any effort that compromises the ability to move freight swiftly and safely for the benefit of American manufacturers and consumers. Furthermore, we believe co-mingling passenger service with freight service requires significant study and capacity enhancement to even be done safely.

While expanding access to passenger rail in population dense areas may bring certain social benefits, we must consider the broad impacts to manufacturing and our economy. Robust manufacturing requires steady freight access with no secondary agenda that strains capacity or workforce. Our state continues to expand manufacturing capacity and is a national leader in efforts to re-shore industry on American soil, with Americans employed.

Tennessee facilities like Ford Motor Company's electric vehicle "mega-campus," which will be home to both a vehicle production facility and a battery assembly plant, require unfettered access to freight tracks. Without dependable freight access, we will hamstring companies like Ford and hurt employers, employees and consumers in the process.

We respectfully ask the Board to instead focus well-meaning efforts on supporting a stable rail supply chain. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

Bill Lee  
Governor

CC: FD 36496 Service List