

FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



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Chairman Martin J. Oberman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

Reference: Support Letter for Surface Transportation Board (STB) Passenger Rail Advisory Committee Membership (PRAC) Nomination

Dear Chairman Oberman,

On behalf of the Florida Transportation Commission (FTC), I'm pleased to write this letter of support for Ms. Kim Holland's nomination to serve on the STB PRAC as a voting member. As FDOT's Assistant Secretary of Strategic Development, Kim works closely with the FTC on transportation policy issues of statewide importance across all modes. She also coordinates Florida Rail Enterprise activities with the FTC, including Work Program review, performance of passenger rail and freight rail operations, infrastructure initiatives and barriers, potential conflicts between passenger rail carriers and freight railroads, legislative priorities, and regulatory processes related to both freight rail and intercity passenger rail.

Ms. Holland is a highly competent and nationally recognized leader in the transportation industry and is committed to advancing passenger rail in Florida. Her deep understanding of both public and private sector objectives and motivations allows her to work seamlessly with the passenger rail and freight rail partners and develop solutions to move Florida forward. She is passionate about improving safety, enhancing resiliency, leveraging technology, bolstering the supply chain, developing next-generation workforce, and delivering community-centric projects that best serve the residents, businesses, and visitors, of Florida. As a voting member of the AASHTO Transportation Policy Forum, she understands the importance and intricacies of effectively providing information, advice, and guidance to national Boards in a collaborative and multidisciplinary forum.

We have a rich history of passenger rail in the state dating back to the Henry Flagler days. We developed two state-owned regional commuter rail systems (Tri-Rail and SunRail), we have four urban rail systems (Miami-Dade Metrorail and Metromover, Jacksonville Skyway, and Tampa Streetcar), Amtrak provides long distance intercity passenger rail service, and Brightline made history in Florida as the first private passenger rail to launch in the United States in over a century back in 2018, when it connected Miami and West Palm Beach, and its service was expanded to Orlando last year. And, of course, our Class I, Class II, and Class III freight railroads play a critical role in Florida's supply chain by producing \$83 billion value-added economic impact and supporting 1.1 million jobs.

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Given our continued population and tourism growth, passenger rail must be an integral part of our strategy to enhancing mobility in the state - connecting residents with jobs, bringing visitors to vacation destinations, and providing new, safe, and sustainable travel options while enhancing economic prosperity and preserving the quality of our environment and communities. In fact, we are working with the Federal Railroad Administration to develop service development plans for the Jacksonville-Orlando-Miami Corridor and the Miami-Orlando-Tampa Corridor through the Corridor ID program. FDOT also has initiatives to improve rail safety and develop new rail standards to elevate the industry. Kim Holland is leading the charge for the state.

Given our extensive experience with not only developing and operating passenger rail services; but also dealing with regulatory, policy, capacity, safety, liability, funding, and performance issues on a regular basis; I strongly believe that STB will greatly benefit from having a representative from Florida on the PRAC. I'm confident that Kim will be an excellent addition to the PRAC, and I fully support her nomination.

Thank you for considering Ms. Holland's nomination. If you have any questions regarding this letter of support, please feel free to contact me at 850-414-4105 or ftc@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,



Ronald Howse, P.E.
Chairman