

May 30, 2018

Honorable Ann D. Begeman, Chairman
Honorable Deb Miller, Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

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Re: Docket No. FD_36025_0

Dear Chair Begeman and Vice Chair Miller:

I am writing to express my support for the high-speed rail project that will connect Texas' two major population centers, North Texas and Houston, while also filling a significant gap in the U.S. passenger rail network.

I am pleased that Amtrak has embraced the high-speed rail project as shown in the recently announced comprehensive through-ticketing agreement with Texas Central that integrates the Texas Central line into the national rail network, making ticket-buying and trip-scheduling much easier for future travelers. The ability for Amtrak passengers to purchase one single through-ticket to travel on both systems is a fundamental feature that will have a positive impact on all Amtrak passengers traveling to-or-through the Lone Star State. It was also great to see that Texas Central agreed to fund a transfer service between Amtrak and their stations.

The developers of the project, Texas Central, have already invested millions of dollars toward bringing this project to our part of the country. It's unique investor-led model, combined with the immense scale of the more than \$12 billion project, creates a real opportunity for America to improve its national passenger rail system and maximize the potential of this new industry without placing more strain on already stretched budgets.

On a regional level within the state the project will have positive benefits on the quality of life for all Texans traveling between these two regions who now spend countless hours fighting traffic on congested highways or standing in long lines at overcrowded airports.

In comparison to these two modes of travel, the 240-mile high-speed rail route, outlined in the Federal Railroad Administration's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, shows that it is in a sweet spot for high-speed rail service, offering a competitive travel time with airline service, which over the past decade, has been reduced between the two cities. The main carrier, Southwest Airlines, stopped serving Dallas Love Field to Bush Intercontinental Airport in 2005 and has reduced daily flights between Dallas Love Field and Houston Hobby Airport in the last 10 years. These two regions are now underserved by common carriers, plagued by traffic congestion and have not had a viable passenger rail alternative since the 1990's when a leg of the Texas Eagle was discontinued.

For these reasons and more, I believe the STB should wholeheartedly support this landmark project that has the potential to be a model for future high-speed rail lines throughout the US. I urge the Surface Transportation Board to fully and thoughtfully consider Texas Central's Petition to Reopen.

Sincerely,

Peter J LeCody, President
Texas Rail Advocates
800 Jaguar Lane
Dallas, Texas 75226

Cc: All parties of record