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Julie Villaescusa
1314 Dart St
Houston, TX 77007

713-248-1123

November 3, 2019

RE: FD 36025

Surface Transportation Board:

In their PETITIONERS' MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE SURREPLY TO REPLIES, Texas Central states that "The extensive replies submitted by Texans Against High Speed Rail ("TAHSR") and Delta Troy Interests, Ltd. ("Delta Troy") in opposition to Texas Central's Response to the Surface Transportation Board's Request for Additional Information raise a variety of issues and arguments that **mischaracterize Important facts, make unsupported claims**, and misinterpret Board and Supreme Court precedent." Texas Central goes on to say, "The attached Surreply also does not raise any new arguments, but instead **clarifies facts** and legal precedent that will aid the Board in its decision-making process." ¹

In Texas Central's Surreply, Texas Central **mischaracterizes an unsupported claim as fact**. Therefore, I request the STB allow my reply to clarify facts to aid the Board in its decision-making process.

Amtrak is not required to eliminate the Thruway bus, therefore the ridership numbers provided to the STB are inaccurate.

Texas Central's Surreply states that "**Amtrak's interstate passenger estimates are accurate and Texas Central is relying on them.**"² After reading Delta Troy's response, I believe that Amtrak's estimates are based on an invalid assumption, and therefore not accurate.

Delta Troy says, "The low Amtrak figures are not a surprise because the theoretical Amtrak-bus-TCR journey through Dallas would be **slower and more cumbersome** than the existing Amtrak Thruway Bus it is meant to replace."³ In fact, as Delta Troy points out, the trip via Texas Eagle/rubber tire bus/HSR through Dallas from points north to Houston would take "an **hour and 15 minutes longer**"⁴ than taking the Thruway bus from Longview to Houston.

I was stunned to realize that the high-speed rail will create a slower trip than the Thruway bus, which made me question why Amtrak would eliminate the quicker, cheaper option with fewer transfers. But **Amtrak has never stated they will eliminate the Thruway bus**, and the Thruway bus is never even mentioned in the "through-ticketing agreement".

¹ [https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/A429B666855D7CF68525849D006D56B4/\\$file/248655.pdf](https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/A429B666855D7CF68525849D006D56B4/$file/248655.pdf) letter p2

² [https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/A429B666855D7CF68525849D006D56B4/\\$file/248655.pdf](https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/A429B666855D7CF68525849D006D56B4/$file/248655.pdf) Surreply p2

³ [https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/D452715B9F0010CA8525848D006A4D7D/\\$file/248564.pdf](https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/D452715B9F0010CA8525848D006A4D7D/$file/248564.pdf) p 2

⁴ Delta Troy p 5

The elimination of the Thruway bus is merely an assumption input into the ridership model, not something that is required. Texas Central's response for additional information states that one of the items the "projections for the number of Connecting Passengers developed with the Long Distance Model **are based upon**" is that "The connection via Texas Central **replacing the Thruway bus** service Amtrak operates between Houston and Longview, Texas to connect with the Texas Eagle".⁵

If Amtrak's ridership numbers are based on an invalid assumption, they are not accurate. How many people would choose the slower, more expensive HSR over the faster, cheaper Thruway bus if the bus is still an option? We don't know, because Texas Central didn't include these numbers in their response.

Amtrak never says that the Thruway bus service **will be** replaced by the HSR, just that the ridership numbers **are based upon** that assumption. **Texas Central saying that Amtrak's ridership numbers are accurate is mischaracterizing a fact based on an unsupported claim. Delta Troy also mischaracterizes the unsupported claim of the elimination of the Thruways bus as a fact.**

Texas Central also states in their Surreply that their plans "incorporate a transfer window sufficient to ensure passengers make their connections in the event of traffic or train delays"⁶. However, this is also an unsupported claim as Texas Central fails to address accommodations for the estimated 20% of Sunset Limited westbound passengers who would arrive in Houston after the last HSR has left for the night.⁷

Sincerely,

Julie Villaescusa

I certify that I have this day served copies of the document upon the parties of record in this proceeding, by US mail or email

Signature /s/ Julie Villaescusa Date November 3, 2019

CC: all parties of record

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⁶ Surreply, p 4

⁷ [https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/51DCEBC3F055C7508525848D004908D1/\\$file/248560.pdf](https://www.stb.gov/Filings/all.nsf/WEBUNID/51DCEBC3F055C7508525848D004908D1/$file/248560.pdf) p 7