

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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October 7, 2019

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman
Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Member
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Patrick J. Fuchs
Vice Chairman
U.S. Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Docket No. FD 36025

Dear Chairman Begeman, Vice Chairman Fuchs, and Member Oberman:

We are writing to reiterate our strong support for the proposed Texas Central High-Speed Train Project, which would provide a new connection between two of the country's fastest-growing metropolitan areas. It will not only allow fast and safe travel between Houston and Dallas, but also facilitate rail travel to all parts of the country. With the Board's oversight, it will serve as a model for the development of high-speed rail projects throughout the United States. This project will be good for both Texas and the nation - exactly the type of project that the Surface Transportation Board should have jurisdiction over.

Since last April, when we last communicated our interest to the Board, we are pleased to see that some significant milestones have occurred that will bring this project even closer to realization. In light of these significant milestones, we urge you to quickly grant Texas Central approval to construct and operate this exciting project.

First, Amtrak has identified the route between Houston and Dallas as a "missing link" in its national rail network. It now estimates that thousands of passengers from outside Texas will use this new high-speed line starting in its first year of operation. We are confident that those numbers will quickly grow as more people learn about this exciting new transportation alternative.

Also, in August, The Federal Railroad Administration acted to move forward on the Rule of Particular Applicability. This is a significant milestone for the project and demonstrated the government's commitment to a thorough, but timely, review process that will ensure the extraordinary safety of the system.

We are aware that Texas Central has asked the Board to use the streamlined "exemption" procedure provided the agency under the ICC Termination Act. It is our understanding that the

Board routinely provides such exemptions in order to streamline the decision-making processes and accelerate the delivery of rail projects that advance important rail policy goals and do not place burdens on rail shippers.

Given the thorough review that has already taken place – and the positive momentum generated by the recent FRA announcement– we believe the Board should maintain long-held practices and grant this exemption consistent with its treatment of similar petitions. By doing so, the Board can help advance important rail policy goals, create thousands of American jobs, and spur the high-speed rail industry in the United States.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



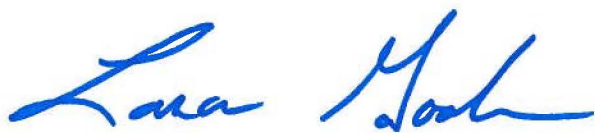
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



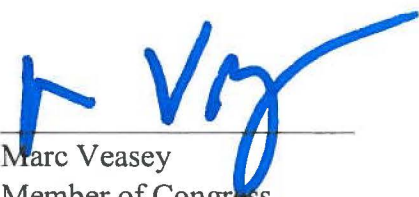
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



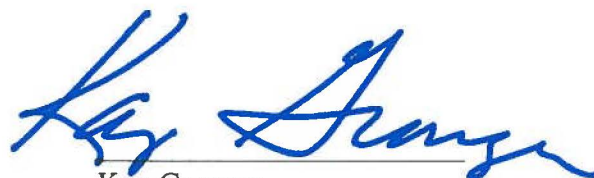
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Member of Congress



Lance Gooden
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