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U.S. House of Representatives
32nd District, Texas

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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

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

I am writing to reiterate my strong support for the proposed Texas Central High-Speed Train Project, which would provide a new connection between Dallas and Houston; two of the country's fastest-growing metropolitan areas. With the Surface Transportation Board's oversight, this project will serve as a model for the development of high-speed rail projects throughout the United States. This project will benefit both Texas and the nation and should fall under the jurisdiction of the Board.

In April several of my colleagues and I expressed our support to the Board, and I am pleased to see that since that time significant milestones have occurred to bring this project even closer to realization. In light of these significant milestones, I 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. With the joint ticketing agreement between Amtrak and Texas Central, thousands of passengers from outside of Texas will use the high-speed line, which will significantly reduce congestion on our highways. I am confident that those numbers will quickly grow as more people learn about this new transportation alternative.

Also, in August, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) moved 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.

I am aware that Texas Central has asked the Board to use the streamlined "exemption" procedure provided the agency under the ICC Termination Act. It is my 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 - I 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,


Colin Allred
Member of Congress