

I would like to participate in the public hearing on February 15th regarding Docket No. FD 36496. I represent myself and support passenger rail. My name is Betty Sparkman and I request 2 minutes. My key points are to describe Pass Christian, MS and say why I support passenger rail.

Pass Christian, Mississippi is a 6,000 person town along the MS Gulf Coast. It is approximately 6 miles long and a mile wide. Pass Christian's economy is driven by several seafood-related businesses, oyster and shrimp fishing and processing, as well as a thriving small business community. Boutique hotels, restaurants, and shopping are all situated in the downtown core of several walkable streets and blocks beside Memorial Park.

The slower pace, the friendly shopkeepers, the cordial citizens, and the warm gulf breeze lure many to Pass Christian for either a visit or to call the community home.

The CSX railroad runs the entire length of Pass Christian. Cargo trains barrel through the middle of town several times during the day and night. The trains block traffic, blare horns and rattle houses.

Allowing passenger rail service on these tracks would turn this scourge into a positive for our community. Pass Christian is not slated for a stop but Gulfport, 10 miles to our east and Bay St. Louis, 5 miles to our west will have easily accessible stations. We believe passenger train service along the coast beautifully synchronizes with the City's desire for more tourism and safer access to Mobile and New Orleans.

Thank you.

Betty Sparkman
Ward 1 Alderwoman
City of Pass Christian

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