

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP
DEAN
TEXAS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION
CHAIRWOMAN
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE
AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER
RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RAILROADS,
PIPELINES, AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS
CHAIR, 107TH CONGRESS



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Congress of the United States
30th District, Texas

PLEASE RESPOND TO:
WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2306 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4330
(202) 225-8885
DALLAS OFFICE:
1825 MARKET CENTER BOULEVARD
SUITE 440
DALLAS, TX 75207
(214) 922-8885
WWW.HOUSE.GOV/EBJOHNSON/
[TWITTER.COM/REPEBJ](https://twitter.com/REPEBJ)
[FACEBOOK.COM/CONGRESSWOMANEBJTX30](https://facebook.com/congresswomanEBJTX30)
[YOUTUBE.COM/REPEBJ](https://youtube.com/REPEBJ)
[INSTAGRAM.COM/REPEBJ](https://instagram.com/REPEBJ)

FD 36500

October 19, 2021

303109

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
October 20, 2021
Part of
Public Record

Dear Chairman Oberman:

As the representative of Texas' 30th congressional district and senior member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I am writing to you to underline my support for expeditious action on the proposed I-20 Corridor long-distance passenger rail route. This proposed route is an East-West connection between Dallas/Fort Worth and Atlanta, Georgia, which my staff and I have been advocating for with Amtrak President Stephen Gardner and his team.

President Gardner expressed in a virtual meeting on August 23, 2021, that he agreed that the I-20 Corridor route would be economically viable and could be established for a relatively small investment, between \$80 million and \$200 million. Moreover, he believed it would be a significant improvement and expansion to Amtrak's national network and connectivity.

The I-20 Corridor passenger rail route would not only connect two very important, fast-growing regions of our nation and provide service for more than 15 million people in urban and rural areas along the route but would also create excellent synergies with Amtrak's existing *Texas Eagle* and *Crescent* operations.

Additionally, the route has been the subject of both a feasibility study and capacity study, which were funded by a \$738,000 federal grant obtained by the non-profit I-20 Corridor Council with the assistance of former U.S. Senator Kay Bailey

Hutchison. The studies indicate that the passenger rail connection would require no operating subsidy from any of the states through which the route traverses and would operate over existing railroad infrastructure. Moreover, the construction of the planned-for sidings would also benefit the freight traffic for the host carriers.

The host railroads for the I-20 Corridor route between Dallas/Fort Worth and Atlanta are Trinity Railway Express (TRE), Union Pacific (UP), Kansas City Southern (KCS), and Norfolk Southern (NS).

In a follow-up letter to the meeting President Gardner indicated that Amtrak's head of Strategy and Planning, Dennis Newman, and his team are currently working to refresh the analysis of Long-Distance service along the I-20 route.

"Connecting the dots" of the relatively short distance (345 miles) between Marshall, Texas and Meridian, Mississippi on existing right of way (owned by UP and KCS) would not only create an East-West connection across America's Southern region between Texas and the East Coast, but also create a transcontinental connection from Los Angeles to New York City (connecting with Amtrak's *Sunset Limited*, *Texas Eagle*, and the *Crescent*).

I have attached a fact sheet which contains a map and additional information about the proposed I-20 Corridor route (*Attachment #1*).

Because of the myriad economic, transportation, environmental, quality of life, and jobs-related benefits that the proposed I-20 Corridor passenger rail route would bring to our Southern region and the nation, I have a strong interest in seeing that this route be made available to passenger rail and Amtrak service, should a merger with KCS and Canadian Pacific (or another prospective party) be approved. Canadian Pacific (CP), one of the potential parties to the merger, has already indicated its willingness to negotiate with Amtrak, as reflected by the attached letter from CP President Keith Creel to the Louisiana Secretary of Transportation, Shawn Wilson. (*Attachment #2*).

Given the numerous benefits of the proposed I-20 Corridor passenger rail route, I respectfully request that the Surface Transportation Board impose suitable conditions during any potential merger negotiations and regulatory review, which would ensure that the portion of this route currently owned and operated by KCS would support the use of the route for passenger rail service.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

cc: Board Member Ann D. Begeman
Board Member Patrick J. Fuchs
Board Member Robert E. Primus
Board Member Michelle A. Schultz

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg
Mr. Stephen Gardner, President, Amtrak
Mr. Dennis Newman, Executive Vice President, Planning & Strategy,
Amtrak
Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards
Dr. Shawn Wilson, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Transportation &
Development
Mr. Michael Morris, P.E., Transportation Director, North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Judge Richard Anderson, Chairman, I-20-Corridor Council

Proposed I-20 Corridor Long-Distance Passenger Rail Connection between Dallas/Fort Worth and Atlanta

(through Northeast Texas, Northern Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia,
and connecting with the East Coast and New York City)



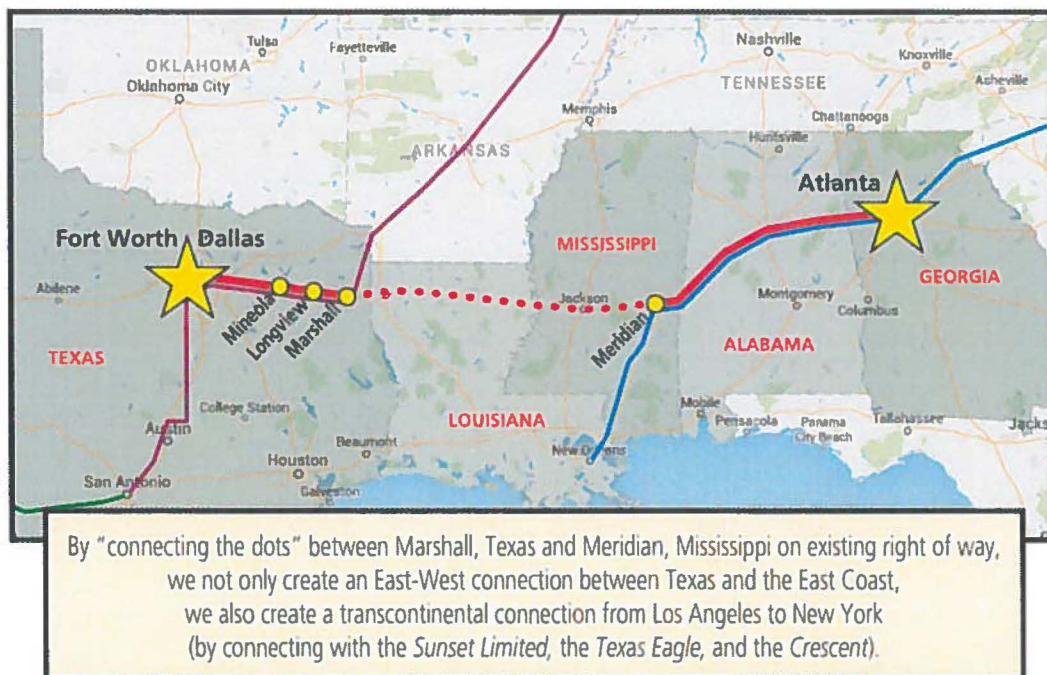
The I-20 Corridor passenger rail route should provide an excellent Return on Investment.

By connecting the relatively short distance between Marshall, Texas and Meridian, Mississippi (345 miles) on existing right of way to create this long-distance train between Dallas/Fort Worth and Atlanta, this would effectively create new economic development opportunities which do not currently exist from the Southwest across the Southern region to the East Coast.

We believe the I-20 Corridor passenger rail connection will be very beneficial for our states, region, and nation and should provide an excellent return on a relatively small capital investment.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE I-20 CORRIDOR LONG-DISTANCE TRAIN

- ★ A 2015 Amtrak feasibility study determined that this long-distance passenger rail connection is economically viable and would:
 - require **NO** annual operating subsidy for any of the states through which the route traverses
 - operate over existing railroad infrastructure (right of way)
 - require no need for the exercise of eminent domain
 - travel at the currently authorized maximum speed of 79 mph, with the potential to achieve speed of up to 115 mph
 - provide two trains daily (one eastbound, one westbound). For Fort Worth, Dallas, Mineola (Tyler), Longview, and Marshall who have *Texas Eagle* service, this would mean four trains daily between East Texas cities and Dallas/Fort Worth.
- ★ The I-20 Corridor Council obtained almost \$740,000 in federal funds in 2007 and 2008, with the assistance of former U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison for studies of the I-20 rail corridor. Using a portion of the federal grant funding, the Corridor Council worked with Amtrak, Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), HNTB, and Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) of Texas A&M on a multi-state capacity study (TX, LA, MS) to identify the capital investments that will be required along the route. The capacity study was completed in December, 2017.
- ★ The host railroads (*Union Pacific, Trinity Railway Express, Kansas City Southern*) will likely require a one-time capital investment to be paid by the states and / or federal government, once negotiations occur between Amtrak and the host railroads. The 2017 capacity study suggests that a capex investment of some \$80 million in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi would enable new passenger rail service on this route without adversely affecting freight traffic along the host railroads.
- ★ The Corridor Council is a strong, grassroots, multi-state coalition of mayors, local, state, and federal officials, business and economic development leaders, university and college presidents, and many other stakeholders who support this long-distance train. We have obtained Memoranda of Understanding from Councils of Governments representing all counties and parishes between Fort Worth eastward through Mississippi. The route also has the strong support of the Southern Rail Commission.
- ★ Officials who have expressed strong support for the proposed I-20 Corridor passenger rail connection include Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (Texas–30th District) who also serves as a senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, Louisiana Secretary of Transportation Shawn Wilson, and U.S. Senator Roger Wicker of Mississippi.



Thank you for your kind consideration of this worthy transportation project to benefit our states, region, and nation.

For more information, please call the **I-20 Corridor Council** (903) 938-8373
211 West Austin Street, Marshall, Texas 75670 ★ Contact: Christina Anderson cca@andersonpartners.org

www.i-20corridorcouncil.com



Keith Creel
President and Chief Executive Officer

7550 Ogden Dale Road SE
Calgary Alberta
Canada T2C 4X9

T 403 319 7600
F 403 205 9000
E Keith_Creel@cpr.ca

June 24, 2021

Dr. Shawn Wilson
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Transportation
1201 Capitol Access Road
Baton Rouge, LA, 70802

Dear Secretary Wilson,

I understand and appreciate the State of Louisiana's interest in passenger operations both between New Orleans and Baton Rouge as well as from Meridian to Shreveport and on toward Dallas. I am writing to you to provide CP's perspective and position on these proposed passenger operations.

I think it is important to know that CP has a proven track record of co-operating and operating passenger trains on its network. In particular, our intercity track record is second to none when it comes to Amtrak. We are the top performing Amtrak host railroad for 5 years in a row and we are the first to complete 100% certification of our Amtrak schedules. When we look at the proposal for a new service between New Orleans to Baton Rouge, CP can't speak for KCS but if we were to be successful in its proposal acquire the KCS we would be supportive of working with all stakeholders to introduce passenger service between New Orleans to Baton Rouge.

With our proven track record of co-operation and performance we are the best potential operator to enable this service to become a reality. I will note that the CN proposal would have the KCS divesting its operation between New Orleans and Baton Rouge – but the CN would retain trackage rights on the operation. The complexity the CN acquisition brings and the unknowns it introduces would seem to significantly jeopardize a successful Amtrak operation never mind implementing the service in a reasonable timeline. We also believe that the line has ongoing capital needs and if we are successful we would be in a strong position to ensure the level of maintenance is up to a mainline standard that would efficiently support both freight and passenger operations.

In looking at Meridian to Shreveport to Dallas – again I can't speak for KCS. If successful, CP would be committed to reviewing and participating in studies with the goal of introducing a train pair in this corridor. I will note that the line between Meridian and Shreveport is a joint venture between KCS and NS called the Meridian Speedway LLC so we would need NS support to make commitments to the service. I will also note that past work identified the UP route from Shreveport to Dallas as the preferred option and so the UP is also an important stakeholder to engage.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith Creel".

Keith Creel
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Pacific

cc: The Honorable John Bel Edwards, Governor of Louisiana
William J. Flynn, Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak
Southern Rail Commission