



ALABAMA STATE SENATE

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GREG REED

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March 8, 2022

SENATE DISTRICT 5
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WALKER AND WINSTON

Cynthia T. Brown
Chief of the Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Gulf Coast Passenger Service Between New Orleans and Mobile
STB Finance Docket No. 36496

To Whom it May Concern:

As President Pro Tempore of the Alabama Senate, I am committed to doing all I can alongside my colleagues to ensure that our state's transportation sector is as strong as it can possibly be.

I write today to share my opinion that the proposal currently before the Surface Transportation Board to add passenger rail service between New Orleans and Mobile would have a risky effect on the current and future strength and stability of Alabama's freight rail network. The introduction of additional passenger rail traffic without a careful and complete analysis of its impacts on the performance of pre-existing freight railroads creates a questionable degree of risk for Alabama's broader economy.

The prospect of adding passenger trains to the busy freight rail lines that connect so many Alabama manufacturers with the Port of Mobile is particularly concerning. The Port of Mobile is among the busiest and most critical gateways for both domestic and international trade on the Gulf Coast. 58 million tons of cargo move through the Port of Mobile annually, generating \$26.8 billion in economic value for the state of Alabama.

Twice-daily passenger trains will make it harder for the Port to keep pace with the shipping needs of an already strained supply chain. Not only will this effect consumers, but it will also be burdensome for Alabama's business community and, especially, the manufacturers in our state that look to freight rail and the Ports for access to international trade.

Alabama has succeeded in attracting significant investment on the part of manufacturers and the broader private sector community in recent years thanks to our state's generally favorable business climate. Strong transportation infrastructure is part of what makes our investment landscape attractive.

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My support of the Port of Mobile's position and the need for a freight rail analysis should not be construed to mean that I am fundamentally opposed to the re-introduction of passenger rail in our state; rather, I believe that it is important to seek as much information as possible regarding impacts to freight rail service and the potential for ripple effects across state commerce generally. It is clear from the reported information that many questions currently remain unanswered.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit my position in writing and thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Greg J. Reed

Senate President Pro Tempore

cc: FD 36496 Service List