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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 22, 2018

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Gov. Scott: FDOT Begins Process for Privately Funded High-Speed Rail from Orlando to Tampa

TALLAHASSEE, Fla – Today, Governor Rick Scott announced that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has begun the process to allow for private investment in a high-speed rail connection from Orlando to Tampa. FDOT and the Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) received an unsolicited proposal to lease property owned by the state and CFX to build a high-speed train along Interstate 4. Based on the unsolicited proposal, FDOT, on behalf of the State and CFX, is initiating an open, transparent procurement process so any interested private entities may apply. The request is for those interested in leasing FDOT and CFX owned rights-of-way to establish privately funded passenger rail service between Orlando and Tampa.

Governor Scott said, "This is an exciting opportunity for Orlando, Tampa and our entire state. When I became Governor, the Obama administration was trying to use federal taxpayer dollars to pay for a rail connection that had an extremely high risk of overspending taxpayer dollars with no guarantee of economic growth. This is exactly what we're seeing in California, a state which took this bad deal from Obama, and in Connecticut where taxpayers had to shell out hundreds of millions of dollars for their rail line. Instead of placing taxpayers on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars, our goal is for the private sector to invest in this project. **Through private investment, we ensure that this major project has zero financial risk to Florida taxpayers.**"

FDOT Secretary Mike Dew said, "The department is committed to creating a robust transportation system that meets Florida's current and future needs. Privately-funded passenger rail will provide residents and visitors a transportation choice for one of the busiest corridors in the state."

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer said, "Orlando is a destination of choice for those visiting our world-class attractions, attending business conventions or enjoying a weekend getaway. As Mayor, I have worked to ensure that we offer residents and visitors, safe, efficient and affordable transportation options. Having more passenger rail options will create more jobs and make it easier to experience our great city."

Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn said, "Whether it's visiting our pristine beaches or catching a game, adding safe and affordable private passenger rail service will provide a needed alternative for those wanting to spend time in Tampa. Establishing private passenger rail service enables more public transportation options while creating jobs and reducing congestion on our roadways."

Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs said, "Throughout my two terms as mayor, the improvement and expansion of our regional transportation systems has been a top priority. As a premier global destination for guests, families and business leaders from around the world, we're committed to the creation of transportation infrastructure – including private passenger rail - that will serve our residents and guests seamlessly."

In 2011, Governor Scott rejected more than \$2 billion in federal funds for a taxpayer funded 84-mile government train from Tampa to Orlando because the project would have exposed Florida taxpayers to millions of dollars of costs for decades. In other states that accepted funding, there were cost overruns and ongoing operation and maintenance costs. The State of California accepted federal funding for a project that current estimates indicate will experience significant cost overruns, with costs rising from approximately \$33 billion to potentially \$98.1 billion and with the hope of limited service beginning in 2027. In Connecticut, state taxpayers had to pay more than \$560 million for their new government train.

Private intercity passenger rail service has been constructed and is currently being operated in Florida at no cost to taxpayers. This Request for Proposals (RFP) will provide an opportunity for the private sector to expand privately funded passenger rail service in the state at a zero risk to Florida taxpayers. Interested parties will have 120 days to submit proposals after the RFP is released.

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