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Mr. Ed Lee
Rail Planning/Safety Administrator
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS-25
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

Dear Mr. Lee:

The Brevard MPO would like to request the FDOT consider including passenger rail service between Jacksonville and Miami in the Florida Rail Plan.

As you are aware, east coast passenger rail service was previously discussed in 1998-99. Many communities, the FDOT and the Florida East Coast Railway supported the initiation of such service. Inclusion in the Plan could be a beginning step to assess if similar support is present today.

The Brevard MPO request is only for inclusion in a planning document. Considerable additional research on ridership, cost feasibility, station location and funding would eventually be necessary. Brevard local governments are not prepared at this time to make financial commitments as was proposed in 1999. However, the Rail Plan could serve as a vehicle to generate dialogue between East Coast communities and the Department on the general desire for such service. Local support would be essential before the Department or potential service provider would undertake the detailed analysis necessary to actually implement passenger rail service.

The Brevard MPO would also like to call your attention to a recent planning study undertaken by the Orange-Osceola County Expressway Authority on possible new rail service between east Orange County and Central Brevard County. We trust this will be included in the Florida Rail Plan.

Finally, the Space Florida is currently conducting a state-wide assessment of the infrastructure needs necessary to support the aerospace industry in the state. Rail is a major component of their study. Rail is essential for delivering large, heavy rocket components and payloads to the launch site. Under Florida law, space is an officially recognized mode of transportation and FDOT is charged with supporting space-related activities. We strongly recommend including the rail-related findings of the Authority's study in the Florida Rail Plan.

Sincerely,

Robert Kamm
Staff Director

cc: Laura Kelly, Orland-Orange County Expressway Authority
Patrick McCarthy, Space Florida