



Joseph H. Boardman
President and Chief Executive Officer

March 18, 2011

Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Corrine Brown
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Kathy Castor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Nelson, Representative Brown and Representative Castor:

As you are aware, on March 11, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced that approximately \$2.4 billion would be made available, through a competitive process, for the development of high-speed rail corridors across the United States. These are the unused funds that previously had been awarded to the State of Florida for the high-speed rail corridor proposed to connect Tampa and Orlando. Like you, we share your desire for the development of high-speed rail in Florida and were dismayed when the State decided to relinquish their federal funding for this project. With Florida's rejection of these funds, a host of other states have expressed their interest in advancing high-speed and intercity passenger rail projects and are working on applications for the funds. The Federal Railroad Administration has published a comprehensive "notice of funding availability" for the unused funds and applications are due on April 4.

Amtrak recognizes that as the United States continues to move forward on the development of a high-speed rail network, such investment and development are essential in Florida. There are few states so well suited demographically and geographically for deployment of a successful high-speed and intercity rail program. Despite the recent setbacks, every effort should be made to continue to advance a comprehensive plan for rail. Logistically, demographically, and from a population density and distribution standpoint, Florida is one of the top four rail markets in the country.



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For these reasons, Amtrak will be reaching out to work with local leaders in Tampa Bay, Orlando, Kissimmee, Lakeland, Vero Beach, Miami, and Jacksonville, along with officials in the Metropolitan Planning Organizations to collaborate on a rail plan and development timeline. As you may know, Amtrak was excluded from the planning process for the original Tampa-Orlando plan. However, we stand ready to engage in the process and to offer the expertise we have at our disposal to make sure that Florida is positioned to offer competitive applications for federal funding. While the opportunity for funding in this current cycle has passed, it is clear from President Obama's strong commitment to high-speed rail and the achievement of a balanced transportation system that there will most certainly be funding opportunities in the future. The President's proposal for FY12 includes \$8 billion in funding for high-speed and intercity passenger rail, half of which is allocated for new starts. We need to work together now to have all the necessary information ready for the next round of grant applications.

Working together with all of the key stakeholders, I am confident that we can form a meaningful coalition that will work to advance a comprehensive state passenger rail plan that will bring significant changes to the transportation network that will stimulate the economy and enhance the quality of life for Floridians now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Joseph H. Boardman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

Joseph H. Boardman
President and Chief Executive Officer