



PORT NOLA
THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS

302124



April 23, 2021

Allison Davis
Director, Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
April 23, 2021
Part of
Public Record

Dear Ms. Davis:

We write on behalf of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans (“Port Nola”) and the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Commission for the Port of New Orleans (“NOPB”) in regards to the proceedings recently initiated by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (“Amtrak”) before the U.S. Surface Transportation Board (“STB”) to permit the operation of two (2) daily round-trip passenger trains from New Orleans, Louisiana to Mobile, Alabama (the “Passenger Rail Service”).

The Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans (“Port Nola”) is an independent political subdivision of the State of Louisiana and a diverse deepwater port. Port Nola’s mission is to drive economic prosperity throughout its tri-parish jurisdiction - Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard Parishes. Port Nola has access to over thirty (30) major inland hubs via 14,500 miles of waterways, six Class I railroads, including CSX Transportation (“CSX”) and Norfolk Southern Railway (“NS”), and interstate roadways. Port Nola offers a diverse freight cargo profile to service its global supply chain partners, including container, breakbulk, heavy lift, temperature-sensitive cargo and bulk transload. Through its alignment with the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Commission for the Port of New Orleans (“NOPB”), it has strengthened its position as an integrated hub for regional freight-based economic development.

The NOPB is an independent political subdivision of the state of Louisiana and a Class III terminal switching railroad with the primary mission of serving the Port of New Orleans and local customers. The NOPB connects directly with six (6) Class I railroads, including CSX and NS. The NOPB interchanges with both the CSX and the NS seven (7) days a week. The NOPB also serves local customers with a wide range of capabilities, including stevedoring, transload facilities and warehouses, distributors and manufacturers. The NOPB processed over 300,000 freight railcars in the past two years.

Since 2005, when the Passenger Rail Service was last active, Port Nola and the NOPB have both experienced significant growth and increased economic development and investments in the area. Accordingly, while Port Nola and the NOPB are not fundamentally against this service, we respectfully

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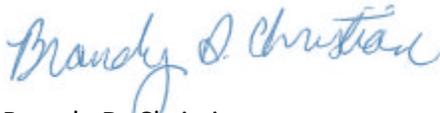
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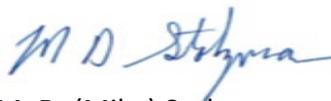
ask that the STB require Amtrak to complete its Rail Traffic Control Study with supplemental engineering and cost report. This comprehensive study is needed to adequately understand the impact the Passenger Rail Service will have on current and future freight service through the region. The study would also help identify what additional infrastructure may be necessary to support passenger rail service while preventing any impact on existing freight service and safety, and accommodating anticipated future growth in the region. We support projects that align with a sustainable environment and a healthy quality of community life that embrace innovative, sustainable solutions that benefit the economy, community and the environment but strongly believe that all additions and subtractions to our transportation ecosystem should be fully studied and vetted to ensure success.

We thank you for your consideration of these issues. If you would like to discuss in greater detail, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Brandy D. Christian
President & CEO
Board of Commissioners
of the Port of New Orleans



M. D. (Mike) Stolzman
General Manager
New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Commission
for the Port of New Orleans

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 23rd day of April, 2021, a copy of the foregoing
Letter was served by email on the service list for Finance Docket No. 36496.

/s/ Brandy D. Christian
Brandy D. Christian
Board of Commissioners
of the Port of New Orleans

/s/ M. D. Stolzman
M. D. (Mike) Stolzman
New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Commission
for the Port of New Orleans