TO: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  

Via: Southern Rail Commission  

DATE: April 21, 2014  

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study  
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service  

Secretary Foxx:  

The Gulf of Mexico defines a common border across political boundaries. Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. Meanwhile, highway and airway transportation have become more costly and congested, impacting our regional and national economic potential. It’s time to restore our passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf Coast states.  

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant supporting restoring intercity passenger rail operations east of New Orleans. The Grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.  

I FULLY SUPPORT THIS PLANNING GRANT ACTION AND REQUEST YOUR APPROVAL OF THE FY2014 TIGER APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION.  

Thank you for this opportunity.  

With greatest regards,  

Tina Ross-Seamans  
Executive Director
May 18, 2016

Southern Rail Commission
100 Lafayette Street
Baton Rouge LA 70810

RE: Bay St. Louis Train Depot

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the grant application submitted by the City of Bay St. Louis for funding of improvements to our historic depot district to facilitate the arrival of Amtrak passenger rail service back to Bay St. Louis and the Gulf Coast. This beautiful depot is one of the few historic landmarks remaining on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and this grant would enable the City to graciously and safely receive our much anticipated passengers.

Bay St. Louis and Hancock County have a history that is built upon the second home market—those travelers who, using the train, came to our shores on weekends and summers. This market has a loyal base of support for our area because of this historic resource. Restoring the Amtrak service to this region will rebuild a market that has not yet rebounded since Hurricane Katrina and the Gulf Oil Spill.

It was the very businessmen of the New Orleans area who established the Hancock Chamber 90 years ago to grow commerce in the region. As the largest business organization in the county, we represent 600 member businesses with 2,500 representatives and 20,000 employees. The mission of the Chamber is to promote the social, civic and economic well-being of Hancock County with particular emphasis upon the development of jobs and the promotion of retail, industrial, agricultural and tourism businesses.

We strongly support the combined efforts of the City of Bay Saint Louis and Hancock County in doing their part to make the return of Amtrak a reality.

Sincerely,

Tish H. Williams
Executive Director

100 South Beach Boulevard, Suite A, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520
www.hancockchamber.org / tish@hancockchamber.org
To: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Via: Southern Rail Commission

From: Bill Hessell  
Executive Director, Harrison County Development Commission

Date: April 22, 2014

Subject: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study  
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service

Secretary Foxx:

The Gulf of Mexico defines a common border across political boundaries. Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. Meanwhile, highway and airway transportation have become more costly and congested, impacting our regional and national economic potential. It’s time to restore our passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf Coast states.

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant supporting restoration of intercity passenger rail service east of New Orleans. The Grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.

THE HARRISON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION FULLY SUPPORTS THE SUBMITTAL OF THIS PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION AND REQUEST YOUR APPROVAL OF THE FY2014 TIGER APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION.

We are glad to offer our support to this vital project and will provide any service within our capabilities to assure the successful return of passenger rail service to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

12281 Intraplex Parkway • Gulfport, Mississippi 39503  
Telephone: 228.896.5020 • Fax: 228.896.6020  
website: www.mscoast.org
May 16, 2016

Mr. Greg White
Chairman
Southern Rail Commission
100 Lafayette Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70801

Dear Chairman White,

The Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission strongly supports the grant application submitted by the City of Bay St. Louis, MS. for renovations to its train depot.

The depot in Bay St. Louis has been a mainstay structure in the city since the early 1900’s, and continues to be a valuable centerpiece to the city for many civic and cultural events throughout the year. A long and distinguished history has evolved around the depot and the surrounding business. Families from New Orleans would stop and stay with relatives in Bay St. Louis over the summer months, while local residents who worked in New Orleans everyday could commute on a daily basis.

The depot has seen troops go to and returning from World Wars I and II, immigrants seeking a better life by settling in the South, as well as being a stopping point for national leaders and heads of state. The continued usability of this structure is a must for the city.

Passenger rail travel played an integral role in the settling and expanding of the population of Bay St. Louis and Hancock County. The reintroduction of this service to the community would be vital to help strengthen and maintain tourism for this region.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my support for this worthwhile endeavor.

Sincerely yours,

William V. Cork
Chief Executive Officer
Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission
May 18, 2016

Southern Rail Commission
100 Lafayette Street
Baton Rouge LA 70810

RE: Bay St. Louis Train Depot

Dear Commission,

On April 29, 2016 by unanimous vote, the Hancock County Tourism Development Bureau Board of Directors approved a resolution of support for the grant application by the City of Bay St. Louis to the Southern Rail Commission. This grant is to improve and upgrade the Historic L & N Train Depot and grounds to facilitate the return of Amtrak passenger service to Bay St. Louis and the Gulf Coast.

Our beautiful depot is one of the few historic landmarks remaining on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and this grant would enable it to graciously and safely receive our much anticipated passengers. The Tourism Visitor Center is located on the first floor of the Depot and we will delight in providing passengers with assistance and local information. On the National Register of Historic Places, the depot also houses the Mardi Gras Museum, the Alice Mosley Museum, a Mississippi Blues Exhibit and the Tourism Bureau office.

The return of Amtrak will proved a strong economic impact to the tourism industry in Bay St. Louis and Hancock County as it further creates need for hotels, restaurants, ground transportation and other support businesses. We would certainly appreciate your positive response to this grant application and will do all we can to partner with Bay St. Louis and Hancock County to make Amtrak a success story.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hospitably yours,

Myrna Green, Manager
TO: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  

Via: Southern Rail Commission  

DATE: April 22, 2014  

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study Supporting  
Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service  

Secretary Foxx:  

Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across  
coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. These states, adjacent to  
the Gulf of Mexico, define a common border across political boundaries. It's time to  
restore our passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf  
Coast states. Our highway and airway transportation have become more costly and  
congested which has seriously impacted our regional and national economic potential.  
With projected increases in population, business, and tourism in our future, this would  
play a major factor in the success of this region.  

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER  
Planning Grant supporting restoring intercity passenger rail operations east of New  
Orleans. The grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the  
conditions, needs, readiness, and social and economic benefits related to restoring  
suspended operations to a daily level of service.  

I THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO FULLY SUPPORT THIS PLANNING  
GRANT ACTION AND REQUEST YOUR APPROVAL OF THE FY 2014 TIGER  
APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION.  

Sincerely,  

Duncan McKenzie  
President/General Manager
May 13, 2016

Southern Rail Commission
100 Lafayette Street
Baton Rouge LA 70810

RE: Bay St. Louis Train Depot

Dear Commission,

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the grant application submitted by the City of Bay St. Louis for funding of improvements to our depot area needed to facilitate the arrival of Amtrak passenger rail service back to Bay St. Louis and the Gulf Coast.

Our beautiful depot is one of the few historic landmarks remaining on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and this grant would enable it to graciously and safely receive our much anticipated passengers.

We strongly support and appreciate the combined efforts of our City and County in doing their part to make the return of Amtrak a reality.

Best regards,

Monica Scott
VP of Marketing
Hollywood Gulf Coast and Boomtown Casino Biloxi
TO: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Via: Southern Rail Commission

DATE: April 22, 2014

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study  
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service

Secretary Foxx:

It is well known that the southern U.S. states economic stability and viability relies on tourism. Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. As a member of the gaming community, an industry that largely contributes to Mississippi’s economic sustainability, I ask for your consideration in restoring passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf Coast states, our industry’s primary target demographic area.

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant supporting restoring intercity passenger rail operations east of New Orleans. The Grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.

I fully support this TIGER Planning Grant and request your approval of the FY2014 TIGER application submitted by the Southern Rail Commission.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Doug Shipley  
President & CEO

160 5th Street Biloxi, MS 39530 228.267.7777 (office) 228.374.2654 (fax)
TO: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Via: Southern Rail Commission

DATE: April 25, 2014

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study  
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service

Secretary Foxx:

The Gulf of Mexico defines a common border across political boundaries. Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. Meanwhile, highway and airway transportation have become more costly and congested, impacting our regional and national economic potential. It's time to restore our passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf Coast states.

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant supporting restoring intercity passenger rail operations east of New Orleans. The Grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.

WE FULLY SUPPORT THIS PLANNING GRANT ACTION AND REQUEST YOUR APPROVAL OF THE FY2014 TIGER APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Robin Krohn David
Executive Director

51
April 24, 2014

TO: US Department of Transportation
    Office of the Secretary of Transportation

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014, TIGER Planning Grant Feasibility Assessment and Economic Impact Study Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service

I am writing on behalf of Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, MGM Resorts International’s 1,740-room full service destination resort in Biloxi. Beau Rivage fully supports the passenger rail service return to the coast. We look forward to providing guests an opportunity to connect with the beauty of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Economic development through tourism is essential to make the Mississippi Gulf Coast a more attractive place to live and work. Passenger rail service restoration will provide the spark necessary to increase tourism to our area. With Biloxi’s prime location between New Orleans and Mobile, thousands of people travel through our backyard to reach neighboring states. With passenger rail service to Biloxi, tourists are provided an opportunity to explore the area, its offerings and why the Coast is considered a hidden gem. We welcome the return of rail service to increase traffic to our area while expanding the Coast’s visibility and tourism opportunities.

Rail service will provide a more cost efficient and greener method of transporting tourists and residents along the Gulf Coast. Tourism plays a major role in the economic livelihood of the Gulf Coast, and safe, efficient, and fast transportation are of paramount importance in any tourist region.

In addition, rail service will enable residents to increase the quality of their lives by providing access to rapid transportation into other job markets. We have a strong advertising, out of home, and direct/digital marketing foundation in the southeastern United States touching several million people per month. This marketing presence will help quickly promote and maintain utilization of rail service along the Gulf Coast.

The Coast is fully prepared to serve the needs of tourists, and the restoration of passenger rail service would be a significant step in making the Gulf Coast the world-class tourist destination it is destined to be. We are fully committed to making this project a success and welcome the opportunity to meet and collaborate with the Commission.

Sincerely yours,

George P. Corchis, Jr.
President and Chief Operating Officer
MGM Resorts International Regional Operations
April 22, 2014

U. S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Via: Southern Rail Commission

RE: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service

Dear Secretary Foxx:

On behalf of the Mississippi Hotel & Lodging Association, a Non-Profit organization established in 1930, please consider this Letter of Support for the above referenced Planning Grant action, and we respectfully request your approval of the FY 2014 TIGER Application submitted by the Southern Rail Commission.

The Application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant will support restoring intercity passenger rail operations East of New Orleans and will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.

Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans, East across the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, Alabama and the panhandle of Florida. During the same period, highway and airway transportation have become increasingly costly and congested, which has greatly impacted our regional and National economic potential.

There is no better time than now to restore our passenger rail service, providing consumers with transportation choices across the Gulf Coast States and a greatly needed economic boon to these areas.

Thank you in advance for this opportunity, consideration and support.

Respectfully,

R. A. "Bob" Bennett
President

Linda G. Hornsby
Executive Director

Headquarters Office:
829 Vieux Marche / P.O. Box 116 * Biloxi, MS 39533 * Tel: 228-374-8611 * 888-565-1122 * Fax: 228-435-0630
Email: MSHotel@aol.com * Web: www.MSHLA.com

Jackson Legislative Office:
P. O. Box 3026 * Jackson, MS 39207-3026 * Tel: 601-352-7646 * Fax: 601-352-7131 * Email: jms@gpac.net
TO: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  

Via: Southern Rail Commission  

DATE: April 23, 2014  

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study  
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service  

Secretary Foxx:  

The Biloxi Chamber of Commerce is the voice of the business, industrial and professional community organized to ensure that Biloxi and Harrison County will fully realize its potential as the financial, retail, wholesale, professional, industrial, marketing, tourist, and cultural center of the Mississippi Gulf Coast area. The Gulf of Mexico defines a common border across political boundaries. Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. Meanwhile, highway and airway transportation have become more costly and congested, impacting our regional and national economic potential. It’s time to restore our passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf Coast states.  

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant supporting restoring intercity passenger rail operations east of New Orleans. The Grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.  

I FULLY SUPPORT THIS PLANNING GRANT ACTION AND REQUEST YOUR APPROVAL OF THE FY2014 TIGER APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION.  

Biloxi Chamber of Commerce is an affiliate of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce. The Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization comprised of businesses in Harrison County and throughout South Mississippi. Through a partnership among the Biloxi, Gulfport, Long Beach and Pass Christian Chambers of Commerce, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce promotes community and economic development on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.  

Thank you for this opportunity.  

With greatest regards,  

Rachael Seymour, IOM  
Director, Biloxi Chamber of Commerce
TO: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  

Via: Southern Rail Commission  

DATE: April 21, 2014  

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study  
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service  

Secretary Foxx:  

The Gulf of Mexico defines a common border across political boundaries. Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. Meanwhile, highway and airway transportation have become more costly and congested, impacting our regional and national economic potential. It’s time to restore our passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf Coast states.  

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant supporting restoring intercity passenger rail operations east of New Orleans. The Grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.  

I FULLY SUPPORT THIS PLANNING GRANT ACTION AND REQUEST YOUR APPROVAL OF THE FY2014 TIGER APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION.  

Thank you for this opportunity.  

Sincerely,  

Kevin O’Brien, Executive Director
TO: U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Via: Southern Rail Commission

DATE: April 21, 2014

SUBJECT: Support for Southern Rail Commission 2014 TIGER Planning Grant  
Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study  
Supporting Restoration of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service

Secretary Foxx:

The Gulf of Mexico defines a common border across political boundaries. Since 2005, passenger rail service has been absent from New Orleans east across coastal Mississippi, Alabama, and the panhandle of Florida. Meanwhile, highway and airway transportation have become more costly and congested, impacting our regional and national economic potential. It’s time to restore our passenger rail service and give better transportation choices across the Gulf Coast states.

The Southern Rail Commission is submitting an application for a FY 2014 TIGER Planning Grant supporting restoring intercity passenger rail operations east of New Orleans. The Grant will fund a Feasibility Assessment & Economic Impact Study of the conditions, needs, readiness, social and economic benefits related to restoring suspended operations to a daily level of service.

I FULLY SUPPORT THIS PLANNING GRANT ACTION AND REQUEST YOUR APPROVAL OF THE FY2014 TIGER APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Crosby  
General Manager  
Palace Casino Resort
May 13, 2016
Southern Rail Commission
100 Lafayette Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70810

Commissioners,

I understand that the City of Bay St. Louis has made application for a Grant and the funds are to be allocated to the beautification and improvement of the Depot area in anticipation of the arrival of the AMTRAK passenger rail service there.

As the person responsible for a business operation that depends heavily on transient tourism traffic to complement our marketing efforts to a very stable target market, I can only say that any enhancements we can make to that area that will allow us to ensure that these travelers have a pleasant experience will be a very welcome addition.

Repeat business will be the key to the success of this new rail service. If these travelers have a good experience, which would include allowing them to see an area that is well maintained and well landscaped, they are more likely to return - and everyone benefits from that.

We applaud the City’s efforts to apply for this Grant and we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John N. Ferrucci
General Manager
Silver Slipper Casino
jferrucci@silverslipper-ms.com