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SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION STATEMENT ON CRISI FUNDING DEADLINE

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The Southern Rail Commission (SRC) regrets that it was unable to apply for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)’s FY17 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety and Improvements (CRISI) funding due to the lack of state funding commitments from Mississippi and Alabama. The CRISI program was created and funded with the support of Senator Wicker and then-Senator Cochran, and the Gulf Coast rail project was well suited to take advantage of this unique opportunity. Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards was prepared to commit $9.5 million towards the project. The SRC stands ready to apply for the FY18 round of funding should Mississippi and Alabama commit the required matching funds.

According to the Trent Lott National Center at the University of Southern Mississippi, restoring passenger rail along the Gulf will deliver an annual return on investment of between $64 million and $525 million for Mississippi, between $19 million and $229 million for Alabama, and between $86 million and $378 million for Louisiana, depending on the increase in tourism. The combined local match between Mississippi and Alabama of approximately $20 million would be more than offset by this unprecedented return on investment.

“I know I speak for my fellow Commissioners when I say I’m very disappointed to not take advantage of this funding for which Gulf Coast Passenger Rail is so perfectly suited. We’ll turn our sights to the 2018 fiscal year, and I’m hopeful we will have full support to apply for CRISI funds at that time,” said John Spain, SRC Chairman.

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About the Southern Rail Commission

The SRC engages and informs public and private rail interests to support and influence southeast passenger rail initiatives. They promote the safe, reliable and efficient movement of people and goods to enhance economic development along rail corridors; provide transportation choices; and facilitate emergency evacuation routes.

The Commission was founded in June of 1982 by the 97th Congress which enabled the formation of an interstate rail compact, which was subsequently approved by the Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama legislatures. The Southern Rail Commission comprises governor-appointed commissioners from each member state. For more information, visit www.SouthernRailCommission.org