

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Ms. Alex Sink
Chief Financial Officer
Florida Department of Financial Services
Plaza Level 11, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0301

April 28th, 2008

Dear Ms. Sink:

We were extremely disappointed to read in your letter addressed to Senate President Pruitt and House Speaker Rubio that you believe the accord reached between the Florida Department of Transportation and CSX came to fruition under a “shadow of darkness.”

To the contrary, this project passed through all of the Central Florida City and County Councils, and has been debated openly with numerous public hearings. In fact, the commuter rail project has been planned and approved with the input of citizens and leaders from each of the four counties as well as the City of Orlando through numerous open public hearings, workshops and meetings.

The terms of the pending contract and agreement between the State of Florida DOT and CSX were the subject of intense negotiations between the parties. Terms were reached in accordance with appraisals of assessed value and include compensation for transportation enhancements that are beneficial to the State of Florida and the public interest. The insurance liability provisions are merely an update of the 1988 Tri-Rail indemnification agreement and are absolutely essential to any future commuter rail or other public transportation alternative in a rail corridor in any part of the state.

Indeed, this project is truly a major cornerstone in the development of a mass transit system for Central Florida. Not since the construction of I-4 has there been a transportation initiative of this magnitude in Central Florida. As more people and cars crowd our region, commuter rail will provide commuters with a cost-effective mass transit alternative to high gas prices and a congested and gridlocked I-4. In addition, economic development around the rail lines is poised to help many of the surrounding communities flourish.

The 61-mile system is scheduled to open the first phase of the project with rush-hour service from DeBary to Downtown Orlando. The federal government will pay 50% of the

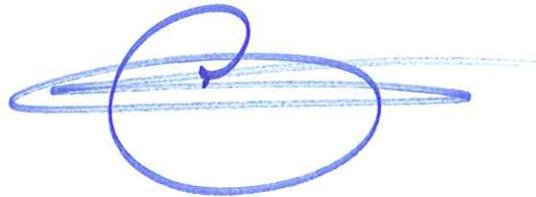
cost while the remaining half will be split between the State and local governments. Commuters could see service begin in 2010. Initial service will run between DeBary to Sand Lake Road in Orlando, which will be used as a transfer point to the Orlando International Airport. Central Florida joins 42 other communities around the U.S. that are developing and building new fixed guideway transit systems.

The leadership of Governor Crist, former Governor Bush, Florida's Department of Transportation Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos, CSX Chairman and CEO Michael Ward, and our State and local governments have helped to make commuter rail and other new rail corridors a reality. All Floridians will soon enjoy the benefits of reduced highway congestion, improved air quality and an alternative way to travel. We categorically believe that commuter rail is of utmost importance to the state of Florida's overly burdened highway system and pledge to continue working hard in Washington to ensure that the vision we have for commuter rail is fully realized.

Sincerely,



Congresswoman Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines
and Hazardous Materials



Congressman John Mica (FL-7)
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure

cc:

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