

BILL CASSIDY
LOUISIANA

DC OFFICE:
SUITE SH-703
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5824

BATON ROUGE OFFICE:
5555 HILTON AVENUE, SUITE 100
BATON ROUGE, LA 70808
(225) 929-7711

COMMITTEE
APPROPRIATIONS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

United States Senate

December 19, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Chao:

It has recently come to my attention that the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) is applying for funding from the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) fund. They are requesting \$32,995,516 to re-establish a passenger rail service between New Orleans, Louisiana, and Mobile, Alabama.

The Southern Rail Commission plans to use the funds to restore the passenger rail service that once connected these cities from 1894 until Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The service would be based on one of the options identified in the Gulf Coast Working Group's final report issued on July 17, 2017. The SRC notes that \$35 million in Fiscal Year 2018 CRISI funding is set aside for restoring or initiating passenger rail. In addition, they note that the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations report prioritizes restoring rail service along the Gulf Coast. To demonstrate their commitment to the project, Amtrak, the City of Mobile, the State of Mississippi, the Jackson County Port Authority, and private sources plan to contribute an equal match of \$32,995,516 towards the project.

I appreciate the department's consideration of this application. I ask that you please keep my office informed on the progress of this proposal as well as when a final decision has been made regarding this grant. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael Eby in my Baton Rouge Office at (225) 929-7711.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator