



November 28, 2014

Mr. John Winkle
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Room W38-311
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Final Comments on All Aboard Florida DEIS

Dear Mr. Winkle:

1000 Friends of Florida is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit statewide smart growth advocacy organization that previously submitted preliminary comments to you regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed All Aboard Florida project on October 27, 2014. This constitutes our final comments which are focused on the North-South Corridor, north of West Palm Beach to Cocoa Beach, where we have a large concentration of our membership.

At this time, we find that the DEIS is at best incomplete, especially with respect to the proposed project's North-South Corridor. We believe the Final EIS needs to include substantial, additional information as noted below. The very comprehensive evaluation of November 18, 2014, prepared by the Martin County Board of Commissioners is particularly useful in pointing out information, evaluation and assessment gaps requiring further detail before an objective review and comment can be made.

The quality of life issues of importance to us would be adversely impacted by the proposed project in the North-South Corridor given the information currently available. We reach this conclusion in light of negative economic impacts to the marine industry, and public and private land values within the buffer areas. We found that substantial and competent information gathered by Martin County calls into question both transportation and boating navigation assessments found in the DEIS. Additionally, impacts to Community Redevelopment Areas, including minority populations, need more current data and analysis than what was used. We also found that the DEIS did not fully explore as it should have alternative routes due to a narrowly defined project consideration heavily weighted on economic factors. This approach meant that the alternative route using the CSX line for both passenger and freight service received a negative assessment even though it avoided many of the adverse impacts that would otherwise be found in the North-South Corridor. Each of these issues needs to be more fully presented in the Final EIS including appropriate mitigation to address the identified impacts.



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These are types of quality of life issues that are very real for area residents here. Those concerns are reflected in the many opposing resolutions adopted by several area cities including Treasure Coast League of Cities, Vero Beach, Port St. Lucie, Village of Tequesta, Sebastian, Mariner Sands, Barefoot Bay , Jupiter Inlet Colony, Town of Jupiter, Town of Jupiter Island, City of Stuart, Sailfish Point, Ft. Lauderdale City Commission, Ft. Pierce, St. Lucie Village, North Hutchinson Island, and Sewall's Point, several counties including Indian River County, Martin County, and St. Lucie County, and numerous citizen and public organizations that include North Beach Civic Association, Guardians of Martin County, Indian River Taxpayer Association, St. Lucie County Fire District, , Preservation Pointes Property Owners Association, North Beach Association, Micco Homeowners Association, Overtown Residents, Marine Industries Treasure Coast, The Oaks at Indian River, and Jupiter Inlet District.

As noted in our previous correspondence, we find that a great deal of additional information is needed before an objective assessment of this project can be completed. We conclude by asking that the Final EIS address the issues raised in this letter and our earlier comments of October 27, 2014, which are attached for your convenience

Sincerely,


Charles G. Pattison, FAICP
Policy Director

Enclosure: October 27, 2014 Preliminary Comment Letter