

James R Hertwig
President and
Chief Executive Officer

December 12, 2016

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx,

On behalf of Florida East Coast Railway, LLC, (FEC) I am pleased to support the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE II) grant, the *Northeast Florida Freight Rail Program*, submitted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). This project represents job growth, opportunity and increased freight capacity to accommodate current and future projected growth for the Jacksonville Port and all the ports along the east coast of Florida.

The *Northeast Florida Freight Rail Program* project expands and upgrades the transportation network for the movement of freight. The project works to alleviate a single point of congestion for freight movement throughout the southeastern United States; thus allowing for increased productivity and modern controls to improve safety. This project helps the flow of freight today and prepares northeast Florida for the post Panamax expansion of port activity. It also prepares the infrastructure for the future North Rail Corridor Project.

Upgrading the transportation infrastructure at this location is critical to our business as almost ½ of all the goods on FEC travel through this critical congestion point. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority working closely with the Railroads have spent years developing and designing a solution to improve fluidity and reliability. The railroads have worked closely on other projects in the past such as West Palm TIGER grant and are ready to move forward on this project.

The *Northeast Florida Freight Rail Program* project, by working collaboratively with the City of Jacksonville, Florida Department of Transportation, Freight Rail, and public and private businesses, will improve the transportation system not just for Jacksonville but for the entire southeastern United States. Again, FEC is in full support of this project.

Sincerely,


James R. Hertwig