



March 8, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

At their March 7, 2022 Commissioners meeting, the Lee County Board of Commissioners voted to support the ***Raleigh to Richmond (R2R) Corridor Infrastructure Engineering Program*** application for the Federal Rail Administration's Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair grant program for fiscal year 2021. The Program is a joint venture between the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA).

The intent of the program is to advance the development of the federally designated Southeast Corridor by providing preliminary engineering for infrastructure improvements and construction of the S-Line, a critical missing link in the Southeast rail network. This important step in development will support expanded high-performance intercity rail service and freight network resiliency between North Carolina, Virginia and beyond.

Overall, the program has both local and multi-regional benefits as it directly effects nine counties (Warren, Vance, Franklin, Wake, Mecklenburg, Lee, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Chesterfield) across North Carolina and Virginia. The program spans approximately 162 miles in both rural and urban areas and will build upon previous federal and state investments in environmental research and documentation of the Southeast Corridor, as well as North Carolina and Virginia's respective acquisitions of the S-Line. This step of incremental engineering prepares the regions for future improvements and services along the rail line that will provide economic development, job growth and enhanced mobility opportunities to underserved and growing communities.

The Commissioners are in support of the grant program to provide a preliminary engineering report and feasibility assessment evaluating environmental and financial factors representing both the pros and cons of developing the S-Line. The Board understands that the program is intended to support the realization of continued planning efforts of future interstate rail infrastructure and service development partnerships that have been established through the Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High Speed Rail Compact and the Southeast Corridor Commission.

Thank you for your consideration of the *R2R Corridor Infrastructure Engineering Program*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kirk Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large "K" and "S".
Kirk Smith

Chairman, Lee County Board of Commissioners