

**GULF COAST
RAIL DISTRICT**
HOUSTON ★ TEXAS

September 9, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD) supports the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Transportation Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan Grant Application that will provide funds for planning a possible high-speed passenger rail service between Austin and Houston, Texas. GCRD is a political subdivision of the State of Texas that was created to work with public and private partners in development and implementation of a systematic approach to improvement of the regional rail network for the benefit of the region's residents and economy. GCRD was established in 2007 and currently includes the following members:

- City of Houston
- Harris County
- Fort Bend County
- Galveston County
- Montgomery County
- Waller County
- Port of Houston Authority
- Texas Department of Transportation (non-voting)
- Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) (non-voting)

The Gulf Coast Rail District participates in the metropolitan planning organization as a voting member and has led recent efforts to plan regional commuter rail. GCRD has coordinated with TxDOT on previous studies regarding passenger rail connections between Houston and Austin and strongly supports continuation of such planning.

The results of TxDOT's Statewide Ridership Study indicated that the potential ridership between Austin and Houston was one of the highest in the state. Currently, there is no passenger rail connection between Austin and Houston. These two cities are growing quickly and driving U.S. economic activity. The Gulf Coast Rail District respectfully requests your approval of TxDOT's application for funding.

Sincerely,



Bert Keller
Chairman