



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE
GOVERNOR

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EUGENE A. CONTI, JR.
SECRETARY

October 2, 2009

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

Attached are the State of North Carolina's HSIPR Program Applications requesting funding for its Track 2-Corridor Programs. When considered with applications from the Commonwealth of Virginia and District of Columbia, the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) Corridor establishes the vital service link with the Northeast Corridor (NEC), thereby forming one of the longest higher speed rail corridors worldwide.

Joining North Carolina (NC) and the Commonwealth of Virginia in ardent support of SEHSR development, thus broadening program impact, are the South Carolina Department of Transportation and Georgia Department of Transportation. Both pledge to continue developing SEHSR to the south.

The applications' project elements fully meet the spirit and intent of the ARRA legislation as envisioned by the President of the United States. Taken together, they hasten our economic recovery, provide mobility for North Carolinians and citizens within the Southeast region and beyond, and enhance the quality of life within our local communities statewide. In addition, they present our comprehensive vision for the development of corridor service and demonstrate regional coordination in service development. Clearly, our program has independent utility and measureable public benefits.

To ensure a systematic deployment and independent utility, North Carolina is submitting four (4) Track 2 applications. Each shows significant infrastructure construction and equipment investments followed by deployment of new service frequencies. Initial construction adds critical rail network capacity and comingled freight, intermodal, and passenger service to our population centers. Simultaneously North Carolina will continue its partnership with Virginia to build a new link in the national network that will connect our state capitals and shorten the travel distance by 35 miles.

Among our private sector partners are the North Carolina Railroad Company (NCR), Norfolk Southern Railway, CSX Transportation, and Amtrak. We have entered into agreements with each and pledged to undertake the project work and provide for access and operations.

Our projects continue NC's storied history of developing and improving freight and passenger rail service begun in 1849 with chartering the NCR. For the past 20 years North Carolina has proudly planned and implemented rail passenger programs to benefit our residents and the Southeast and corridor regions. NC is one of fourteen states to invest actively in intercity passenger rail service routes while also investing heavily in rail infrastructure. We completed more than \$46 million in projects between 2002 and 2008. To conform to FRA and other related guidance, we have paid attention to exceeding the requirements of ridership, project cost, public benefits, congestion reduction, trip time, frequency of service, reliability, and safety.

Importantly now as in the past, North Carolina has planned well and will implement our project elements according to detailed Project Management and Service Development Plans. We will employ our strong 14,000-member NCDOT workforce, which includes a cadre of private engineering firms that have designed and managed comprehensive rail safety and capacity projects since the early 1990's. This universe of firms is larger than has been utilized to date, even when considering that two rail transit new starts have been designed, one of which has been constructed and placed in full operation. This work was completed by NC firms and staff easily available to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) per the Department's transformed Professional Engineering Firms (PEF) procurement process. Please join with NC and support its continued success by providing the funds for our program of projects which commands a ready, reliable workforce.

The transportation, energy, and environmental benefits of a 475-mile intercity passenger rail corridor are significant both short- and long-term. The number of city pairs embedded in the corridor is remarkable. Measurable cost and travel-time savings will be created for people currently travelling by car or plane, thus helping to relieve stress on the system as a whole. Passengers will have real options when choosing preferred travel modes for work and leisure. Data shows that we will divert, per year, 865,000 and 320,000 trips from auto and air respectively to rail. This reduces the congestion growth rate within the corridor and thus air quality emissions per passenger mile travelled. With these diversions we will reduce noxious emissions at a rate of 350,000 pounds per year. Passenger miles for the first full operational year on the 3rd Frequency Piedmont Corridor service are projected at 5.52 million, increasing to 6.16 million in the fifth year, and 6.97 million at the end of the tenth year. Assuming that ridership increases as service improvements continue and new frequencies are added as programmed; we will see more energy efficiencies and enhanced environmental quality over time.

