

Office of
County Commissioners
(919) 989-5100
FAX (919) 989-5179

Dana G. Cuddington, Clerk

Johnston County
POST OFFICE BOX 1049
SMITHFIELD, N.C. 27577

R.S. "Butch" Lawter Jr., Chairman
Patrick E. Harris, Vice Chairman
Tony Braswell
Ted G. Godwin
Fred J. Smith, Jr.
Richard D. Braswell
April Stephens

May 2, 2023

Ms. Julie D. White
Deputy Secretary, Multimodal Transportation
NC Department of Transportation
1501 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

Re: Federal Railroad Administration Rail Corridor Identification Program
Inclusion of Johnston County, North Carolina

Dear Ms. White:

Johnston County has enjoyed intercity passenger and Class I freight rail service and crucial economic benefits and growth therefrom for over 150 years. I am writing as Chair on behalf of the Johnston County Board of Commissioners to express our deep support for increased intercity rail transportation infrastructure investments and inclusion of Johnston County in future plans for rail corridor improvements. Johnston County's economy has grown exponentially both as a County and as part of the greater Triangle region, and is projected to continue to experience growth outpacing virtually all other counties in N.C.

Currently, we enjoy Amtrak intercity passenger railroad service on three routes connecting Johnston County to Raleigh, Charlotte, New York, Miami, Washington and other mid-Atlantic cities as supported by the N.C. Department of Transportation from one train station at Selma. The County also enjoys the benefits of Class I railroad freight service from rail lines owned by the North Carolina Railroad Company (NCRR) operated by Norfolk Southern (NSR), CSX Transportation (CSXT), and the benefits of ongoing investments made by NCRR, NCDOT, NSR, and CSXT.

We understand that the N.C. Department of Transportation, in furtherance of its mission to expand and enhance intercity passenger rail service is pursuing competitive federal planning and capital investment grants pursuant to the Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification and Development program. We understand that these rail corridor improvements will greatly enhance and expand connectivity of passenger rail service in Johnston County for its citizens, businesses, and economic development partners.

I want to express our strong support of inclusion of Johnston County in the FRA Rail Corridor Identification program and the pending grant application of the N.C. Dept. of Transportation, with the specific goals of:

(1) expansion of intercity passenger rail service across Johnston County for, higher frequency train connections to Raleigh, Durham, Research Triangle Park, Greensboro, Charlotte, Richmond, Washington, and other mid-Atlantic cities;

(2) reintroduction of an additional intercity passenger rail station in Johnston County between the existing stations at Selma and Raleigh, and other stations deemed desirable in order to promote greater intercity rail use and convenience in Johnston County;

(3) railroad track and speed improvements which will enhance and not impair freight service throughout Johnston County for economic development; and

(4) funding for Johnston Co. for planning and development purposes for expanding intercity passenger rail service.

Please let us know how we can help NCDOT in this effort, and please keep us informed of developments in this important program. We are eager to hear more about what improvements will be made and how soon these improvements can be constructed for the benefit of our citizens and businesses here in Johnston County for rail service.

Thank you for all that you and NCDOT are doing to improve transportation in our rapidly growing County.

Very truly yours,



R. S. "Butch" Lawter, Jr., Chairman
Johnston County Board of Commissioners

cc: Members of the Johnston County Board of Commissioners
Mr. J. Eric Boyette, Secretary, N.C. Dept. of Transportation
Mr. N. Leo Daughtry, Member, N. C. Board of Transportation
Mr. Melvin Mitchell, Member, N. C. Board of Transportation
Hon. Benton G. Sawrey, North Carolina Senate
Hon. Donna McDowell White, North Carolina House of Representatives
Hon. Larry C. Strickland, North Carolina House of Representatives
Hon. Howard Penny, Jr., North Carolina House of Representatives
Mr. M. Durwood Stephenson, Director, 70 Corridor Commission
Hon. Mayor Byron McAllister, Town of Selma
Hon. Mayor Jody McLeod, Town of Clayton
Hon. Mayor Fleta Byrd, Town of Wilson's Mills