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Congress of the United States
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Mr. Joseph Boardman
President
National Railroad Passenger Corporation
60 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Boardman:

I write to express my strong opposition to recent Amtrak actions that negatively impact the Atlanta BeltLine route. I request that Amtrak immediately withdraw all requests to stay the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) abandonment proceeding filed in Finance Docket No. 35215 and any subsequent or related motions.

Atlanta's BeltLine project will provide an unprecedented combination of transit, trails, green space, and commercial and residential development that will benefit the City of Atlanta, its residents and the Metro Atlanta region for generations to come. The BeltLine also supports vitally needed transportation connectivity request that Amtrak immediately withdraw its request for a stay in the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) abandonment proceeding filed in Finance Docket No. 35215.

Amtrak's actions have the potential to unnecessarily disrupt one of the most important public benefit projects that the City of Atlanta has undertaken in recent memory. This is an issue that can be immediately resolved simply through discussions with the transportation planners in the City of Atlanta who have every interest in preserving and enhancing Amtrak's service to the region. These actions will result in unnecessary costs and delays for this, and has been unanimously adopted in the Regional Transportation Plan. The City of Atlanta (through Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.), with strong support and partnership with the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA), already has invested millions of dollars to acquire the critical first rail corridor ("Decatur Belt") and initiated the federal environmental process. Recent filings by Amtrak in proceedings at the Surface Transportation Board (STB) threaten the viability of the BeltLine project.

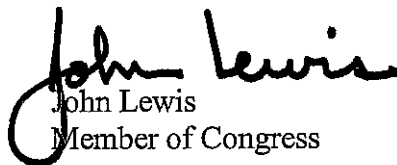
There are many logical alternatives to provide Amtrak with a link to the existing Atlanta light rail and bus transit network. At the very least, Amtrak should take the time to discuss these options with the transportation planners in the City and the region, all of whom have endorsed the relocation of Amtrak's station to other locations. Furthermore, Amtrak's proposed use of the corridor designated for BeltLine purposes is flatly inconsistent with the operations that the City

has proposed and that have been publicly aired and approved by the region's governments, planners and residents.

A stronger local public transportation network can only benefit and strengthen regional and national transportation service. Both Amtrak and the BeltLine can collectively thrive while providing service and connectivity to Metro Atlanta. This is clearly an issue that can be settled quite simply and swiftly through direct dialogue. These combined actions are not the model of a productive and healthy local, State, and federal partnership with the shared goal of revitalizing transportation services in Metro Atlanta. It is my hope that Amtrak serves as a leader in supporting and bringing together local stakeholders to help achieve these objectives.

Thank you in advance for your immediate attention to my concerns. There are many other options available for Amtrak that are more compatible with local land use and transportation planning objectives. I look forward to a prompt response and resolution of this important issue.

Sincerely,


John Lewis
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable James L. Oberstar
The Honorable David R. Obey
The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
The Honorable John W. Olver
