

Lackawanna Cut-Off Interested Parties

Amit Bose, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

This letter is to express the interest of the undersigned in participating in FRA's Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail grant program for the purpose of restoring passenger rail service between New York City and Scranton, Pennsylvania by way of a fully reconstructed Lackawanna Cut-Off route through Sussex County, New Jersey, Warren County, New Jersey, Monroe County, Pennsylvania, and Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania. This entire corridor is owned by local, state and federal government entities and does not require the use of any privately owned FRA Class I railroad properties.

Restoration of the Lackawanna Cut-Off route is supported by numerous civic and business interests on both sides of the Delaware River, and the route is needed for both significant tourism-related travel and worker/business travel along the already congested Interstate 80 corridor in order to relieve highway traffic congestion and provide environmental benefits resulting therefrom. The route has been identified by Amtrak as a "Connects US" new service targeted corridor and is currently the subject of a comprehensive evaluation and cost estimation by Amtrak, scheduled to be completed this August. The Lackawanna Cut-Off route hosted passenger trains until 1970, and the eastern end of the suspended segment is already under construction by New Jersey Transit in order to extend its current service to Andover, New Jersey.

In Pennsylvania, existing track through Monroe County and in Lackawanna County to Scranton is owned by the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority, a willing, supportive, agreeable, and cooperative host for passenger rail service. Some land at the terminus of the rail line in the City of Scranton is owned by the National Park Service and Steamtown National Historic Site.

Amtrak's analysis of the corridor places the estimated economic impact from passenger service from New York City to Scranton at \$87 million per year, and the development in the Poconos in anticipation of tourism from northern New Jersey and New York City is accelerating, with a recent billion-dollar announcement coming from the Margaritaville Resorts group for an expansive complex in Pocono Township, Pennsylvania. The partnership that owns the Margaritaville project has donated land for a passenger station in Pocono Township. The Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (PMVB) has recently funded an economic impact study which determined that Amtrak service on this corridor will produce an additional economic benefit for the Poconos of \$73 million annually.

This is an ongoing project where \$18.2 million has been invested by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with the state government of New Jersey also investing an additional \$17 million. This non-federal investment in this corridor indicates the very strong support that each state has

for this project and, as these expenditures can be well documented, we believe these past investments may be counted, in whole or in part, as eligible for the required, non-federal share of the project.

Finally, this Amtrak corridor has the support of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the form of up to \$125 million in State Capital Budget Authorizations. These funding authorizations, which are outlined in current state law under the state's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP), can be approved and directed by the Governor for eligible and fundable expenditures relating to the Lackawanna Cut Off passenger rail project in Monroe and Lackawanna Counties in Northeastern Pennsylvania. While this funding is subject to legislative action by the PA General Assembly and further executive action on the part of the Governor, there is reasonable expectation that at least, in part, some funding from this source can meet a portion of the non-federal share of construction in the corridor. Further, the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority, the County of Lackawanna, the County of Monroe, the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, and the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau have all pledged an annual financial contribution to the state and local share of any operating fund deficit in forward years of operation.

We look forward to working with the FRA in an interstate partnership to restore passenger rail service between the New York metropolitan area and the City of Scranton.

Sincerely,



Matt Cartwright

U.S. House of Representatives, PA



Josh Gottheimer

U.S. House of Representatives, NJ



Mikie Sherrill

U.S. House of Representatives, NJ



Marty Flynn

Pennsylvania State Senator



Mario Scavello

Pennsylvania State Senator



Steve Oroho

New Jersey State Senator



Mike Carroll

Pennsylvania State Representative



Bridget Kosierowski

Pennsylvania State Representative



Maureen Madden

Pennsylvania State Representative



Kyle Mullins

Pennsylvania State Representative



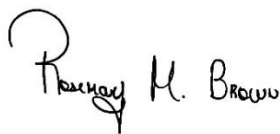
Jack Rader Jr.

Pennsylvania State Representative



Thom Welby

Pennsylvania State Representative



Rosemary M. Brown

Pennsylvania State Representative

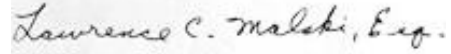


Hal Wirths

New Jersey Assemblyman



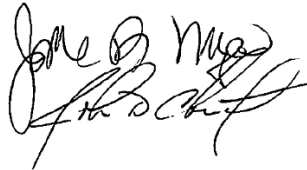
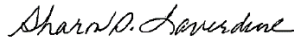
Parker Space
New Jersey Assemblyman



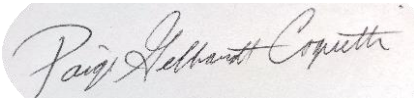
Lawrence C. Malski, Esq., President
Pennsylvania Northeast Railroad Authority



Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania Commissioners Jerry Notarianni, Debi Domenick, Esq., and
Chris Chermak



Monroe County, Pennsylvania Commissioners Chairman Sharon Laverdure, Vice Chairman
John R. Moyer, and Commissioner John D. Christy



Paige Cognetti
Mayor of Scranton, PA



Tarah Probst
Mayor of Stroudsburg, PA



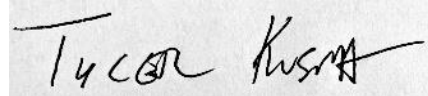
Victor Brozusky
Mayor of East Stroudsburg, PA



Chris Barrett, President
Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau



Bob Durkin, President
Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce



Tyler Kusma, Executive Director
Scranton Rail Restoration Coalition