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Bureau  
Regional Plan Association,  
Inc.  
Select Greater Philadelphia  
Staten Island Chamber of  
Commerce  
Washington D.C. Convention &  
Tourism Corporation

November 9, 2009

The Honorable Joseph C. Szabo  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Szabo:

The Business Alliance for Northeast Mobility, a coalition of more than 30 business and civic groups from Maine to Virginia dedicated to improving the mobility systems of the Northeast Corridor, is writing to request that every effort be made to expedite the environmental review process for the Northeast Corridor.

The Northeast Corridor is vital to the economic success of the region and investment and upgrade of the corridor is critical to our competitiveness. Roughly one-fifth of the nation's gross domestic product is the result of economic activity in the Northeast Megaregion. Future growth in this area depends on the ability to move people and goods quickly and reliably between the region's urban centers.

We were extremely disappointed that the first round of ARRA grant applications passed and no Track 2 corridor applications were submitted for the main line Northeast Corridor due to lack of corridor-wide environmental documentation. Clearly, expediting the environmental process is vital to making much needed improvements. We were also disappointed that the lack of a corridor-wide EIS prevented broadly-supported projects on the corridor that have completed their environmental review, like the Portal Bridge in New Jersey, from being eligible for stimulus funds.

Moving forward, we understand that FRA will be taking the lead on the corridor-wide EIS. We are eager to understand your plan for expediting the EIS so that the Northeast Corridor will be eligible to compete for the next round of stimulus funding.

Other corridors in the Northeast, including the Keystone Corridor in Pennsylvania, from Philadelphia to Harrisburg, the Empire Corridor in New York State, and the Downeaster between Boston and Portland, were able to expedite their environmental assessments to meet the deadline for corridor applications. These applications include important projects to improve regional mobility, but none are as critical to the economic success of the Northeast as the main line Northeast

Corridor. These remarkable achievements demonstrate the commitment and can-do attitude of all parties involved. We ask you to show that same sense of urgency regarding the environmental review process so the Northeast Corridor does not miss out on the next round of federal funding.

We also respectfully request that you convene the PRIIA-mandated Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Advisory Commission following the final passage of the FY10 appropriations bill and provide sufficient funding to this commission to carry out the necessary environmental documentation for the corridor. The Business Alliance played an active role in the passage of the PRIIA legislation, including the provision calling for the creation of the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Advisory Commission.

The continued stability and growth of rail service of the Northeast Corridor is of vital economic importance. Your leadership in this important area will ensure continued growth and vitality in the region for generations to come.

We thank you for your continued leadership and vision in implementing this new high-speed rail program. We look forward to working with you and appreciate your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Robert Yaro  
President  
Regional Plan Association, Inc.



President and CEO, Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce  
Chairman, CEO Council for Growth



Richard A. Dimino  
President & CEO  
A Better City



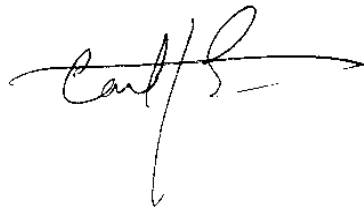
Thomas G. Morr  
President and CEO  
Select Greater Philadelphia



Kevin Corbett  
Vice President, Corporate Development  
AECOM



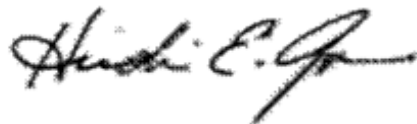
Chip Hallock  
President and CEO  
Newark Regional Business Partnership



Carl J. Stephani  
Executive Director  
Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA)



Denise M. Richardson  
Managing Director/Secretary to the Board  
General Contractors Association of New York



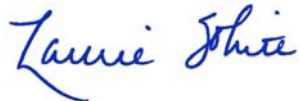
Heidi Green, President  
1000 Friends of Connecticut



Paul J. Choquette Jr.  
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Gilbane, Inc.



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Laurie White  
President  
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce



Otis Rolley, III  
President and CEO  
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance



Lyle D. Wray  
Executive Director  
Capitol Region Council of Governments

Cc: Northeast Congressional Delegation