

Economic and tourism development through transportation

Indiana High Speed Rail Association

October 15, 2012

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Dear Sirs:

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The Indiana High Speed Rail Association was incorporated in June 1994 to support the development of a high speed rail system in the state of Indiana. At the time of our initial efforts, the regional efforts for high speed rail in the Midwest also came into focus. As our organization grew, so did the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. We have continuously supported the MWRRI.

Indiana has three distinct high speed rail corridors within its borders. The corridor from Chicago through Northwest Indiana to Detroit is the one which is receiving your much-deserved attention.

Our organization wholeheartedly supports your work to accomplish a preliminary EIS. Our organization supports those important and required steps to bring high speed rail to Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan via this route being studied. Through your process, the best routes and station stops are likely to be identified.

We further have confidence that your studies will demonstrate the voracity of this route. We know this route has already attracted millions of dollars of investment by Amtrak, the State of Michigan, and the Federal Railroad Administration. We applaud those investments and are most pleased that the Indiana Department of Transportation has contributed \$200,000 toward this study which demonstrates support for this important corridor.

For an Indiana perspective, the route is important from a number of perspectives:

1. Business people from the northwest corner of our state can have immediate access to the system to access business centers in Michigan.
2. Business people from Michigan can have access to our businesses in Northwest Indiana and other locations in our state.
3. Leisure travelers from Illinois and Michigan can access many Indiana destinations for recreational travel. This includes, but is not limited to, our beautiful lake shore and many other recreational destinations in our state.
4. The Chicago-Gary International airport needs careful consideration in this study, as intermodal connectivity at this facility for purposes of air travel, commuter rail travel, and other high speed rail routes.

We know that train frequency and convenience of schedule will determine ridership and therefore the overall benefit of the system. Modern equipment for the traveler is also critical to serving the needs of the traveling public. Attention to these important details is also needed as age, travel by car and air become more challenging.

As we testified at the Michigan City hearing on September 13, 2012 regarding our support, we heard concerns for coordination with Michigan City planners to create a multi-modal hub in that city for high speed and commuter rail as well as other non-rail transportation, such as bus and automobile. We support such connectivity.


The Chicago to Detroit route is part of the much larger 3,000-mile network of high speed trains. Each segment of this network directly or indirectly supports the other segments. For example, motive power and passenger car designs and equipment can be shared. Ridership from each segment combines into a critical mass for competitive advantages for high speed rail versus other modes.

As the citizens of our state and those in the Midwest age, travel by car and air become more challenging. High speed rail offers a critical transportation piece to maintain or increase the quality of life, especially for older citizens. Safety on our highways is concerning as about 40,000 are killed each year in the U.S. High speed rail is exceedingly safe by any comparison.

Safety also comes in the form of air pollution. Auto emissions are poisoning the air we breathe and high speed rail offers a cleaner, more green transportation mode. At the same time, much lower fuel or BTUs to move rail passenger reduces our region's and our country's dependency on foreign oil.

Our organization wholeheartedly supports this work on the Chicago to Detroit corridor, to bring about a modern transportation mode which will serve the citizens of Indiana and surrounding states for centuries to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger D. Sims". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" being the most prominent.

Roger D. Sims
Chairman

Cc: INHSRA Board of Directors
Mr. Rick Harnish, Midwest High Speed Rail Assoc.
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Mr. John Swanson, NIRPC
Mr. Michael Riley, INDOT