

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2017

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Executive Director Patrick Warren  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Warren:

As you know, the Northeast Corridor (NEC) is the backbone of our region, with ridership estimated to grow 59 percent by 2030. Today, the NEC moves more than 365 million passengers annually. The economic impact of the line cannot be overstated: seven million jobs are located within five miles of a station on the line; workers who ride the NEC contribute \$50 million annually to the U.S. economy; and a loss of the NEC for a single day would cost the U.S. \$100 million in travel delays and lost productivity. However, to sustain that economic impact, the NEC will require approximately \$50 billion in investment over the next 20 years simply to achieve a state-of-good-repair and support increased ridership. The NEC's most heavily trafficked bridges and tunnels—many of which are in or very close to Connecticut—are well over a century old. Further, because service levels have virtually reached capacity, even more investments will be required to expand service and fully realize the transformative potential of the NEC.

It is in this context that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) undertook NEC FUTURE, a comprehensive planning effort to define, evaluate, and prioritize future investments in the NEC from Washington, D.C., to Boston. In December of last year, the FRA released a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which contained the Administration's Preferred Alternative for the NEC. The FRA is expected to finalize the FEIS or a modified FEIS in a Record of Decision in March 2017. Until then, the FRA is soliciting comments during the waiting period, which ends on February 28, 2017. The Record of Decision will document the Selected Alternative, which the FRA will use to develop a service development plan, providing the platform for implementation of the program by governmental entities along the NEC.

More than residents of any other state, Connecticut residents have been intensely interested in the work of NEC FUTURE. My constituents provided over half of all of the comments submitted during an earlier comment period. Underlying the intense interest is both a strong belief in the transformative potential of rail investment in the region and a fear that the current iteration of NEC FUTURE's plan will adversely affect the lives of Connecticut shoreline residents, particularly in the towns affected by the proposed bypass routes outlined in the FEIS.

There are numerous aspects of the FEIS that I support. I am particularly pleased that the NEC FUTURE proposal anticipates electrifying the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line, allowing for one-seat travel to the NEC and better connecting Bradley International Airport travelers to

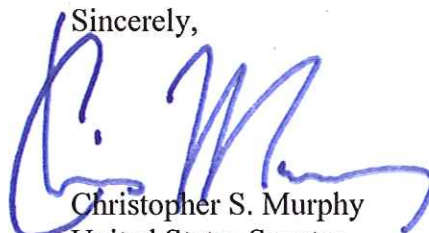
the region. The NEC FUTURE plan also features increased investment in existing and new rail facilities on the route, including New Haven's Union Station, to service the increased number of trains on the line. Further, the FEIS addresses several choke points east of New Haven, from Branford to Guilford, by proposing the installation of new rails. New Haven and the greater-New Haven region are already teeming with new start-up ventures and technology firms, and these improvements and others would help accelerate this economic growth.

However, the FEIS does contain concerning elements, particularly to communities potentially affected by the proposed bypasses in southwestern and southeastern Connecticut. The proposed paths of these bypasses, while not final, may affect various historic towns, sensitive estuaries, and the lives of thousands of residents along the shore. In my view, the FRA's engagement, while extensive, has not been sufficient to mollify concerns in these cities and towns about the proposed routes and the FRA's NEC FUTURE purpose and processes. Moreover, while any and all final construction decisions are to be made at the local and state levels, the NEC FUTURE documents may guide investment decisions for years to come, raising the stakes for your agency to produce content worthy of long-term planning. Therefore, I urge you and the NEC FUTURE team to heed the concerns of these residents before choosing a Selected Alternative.

The transformative potential of increased rail investment is undeniable. In my conversations with Connecticut businesses owners, city and state officials, and commuters—all of whom rely on the NEC—transportation comes up repeatedly as a key issue for improving the lives of residents and bottom lines of businesses. Reducing travel time will make living and working in Connecticut more attractive, accelerating the development of new companies, spurring innovation and investment, and improving the lives of all residents. As I fight to increase levels of rail investment to historic levels, your agency's work remains as important as ever. I vow to work with you to ensure the needs of my constituents are met in the context of any future rail investments.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator