

May 15, 2018



AGENDA ITEM 8

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

TYPE OF ITEM: Information

A status report on the activities of the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) will be discussed including information related to the CSX Railroad (see attachment).

Slay, Greg

From: T. Michael Hines <t.michaelhines@embarqmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 4, 2018 3:28 PM
To: Slay, Greg
Cc: MaryLouise Hester; Lance Watson; Montford Bill; Miller, Nancy; Thomas Gustafson; John Robert Smith
Subject: Fwd: Gulf Wind (CSX) Passenger/Freight Restoration: Appropriations Bill Provision Inserted by Bill Nelson

Greg:

Enjoyed our meeting earlier today. Please see message below and share with Jax Exec. Director and Pensacola Exec. Director. Have already had discussions with others in DC and Capitol about questions and concerns raised in our discussion. I will be back with you when I have answers and solutions.

By the way, it is important that Florida join the SRC ASAP and should have done so many years ago.

Best,

Mike

T. Michael Hines
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(850) 668-0788 * (850) 510-8646 Cell
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t.michaelhines48@gmail.com

Begin forwarded message:

From: John Robert Smith <jrsmith@t4america.org>
Date: April 4, 2018 at 1:54:11 PM EDT
To: "T. Michael Hines" <t.michaelhines@embarqmail.com>
Cc: Devon Barnhart <Devon_Barnhart@commerce.senate.gov>, Mary Hester <MaryLouise_Hester@billnelson.senate.gov>, Bryan Gulley <Bryan_Gulley@commerce.senate.gov>, "Watson, Lance (Rubio)" <lance_watson@rubio.senate.gov>, Bill Montford <bmontford@fadss.org>, Tom Gustafson <tgiscis@aol.com>, Nancy.Miller@talgov.com
Subject: Re: Gulf Wind (CSX) Passenger/Freight Restoration: Appropriations Bill Provision Inserted by Bill Nelson

In response.

A political subdivision of the state can apply for CRISI or REG. Certainly that is FDOT but it could also be the FL economic development authority since this is definitely about economic development. Perhaps there are others.

A public agency or publicly chartered authority established by the state and empowered to do so can apply. Louisiana did this although the SRC will still be the applicant. One would have to provide proof of enabling legislation passed by the State.

Cities and counties can apply. It would be cumbersome but cities/counties along the rail ROW could apply as a unit for the infrastructure improvements needed within their jurisdiction.

Amtrak could apply, which is doubtful under their new administration.

FL could join the SRC, who would then apply.

Ultimately you will have to have state financial support for any option. I have been told that there is \$50M in reserve for rail improvements in FL. That information should be verified.

John Robert

On Wed, Apr 4, 2018 at 1:00 PM, T. Michael Hines <t.michaelhines@embarqmail.com> wrote:
Devon and Mary Louise:

I just completed a meeting with the Executive Director of the CRPTA for North Florida in Tallahassee. He expressed concern to me that the CRISI Grant Application requirements may not permit the filing of an application by the CRTPA or other MPO's, TPO's. Can you clarify that to me. He felt the language may limit applications to the Florida Department of Transportation. He had spoken with his counterpart at the North Florida TPO in Jacksonville, Florida and his counterpart at the West Florida Regional Planning Council in Pensacola, Florida and they have same concerns. Could you clarify?

I am copying Mary Hester on this email so that she knows that none of the TPO's or MPO's in North Florida have Restoration of Passenger Freight Service along CSX corridor across North Florida on a priority project list. All TPO's, MPO's say Passenger Service Restoration along the corridor between Pensacola and Jacksonville (Metro Orlando) is NOT a priority with FDOT and the Governor has not indicated that it is. Until Governor Scott makes such a declaration for Restoration and Funding purposes the Florida DOT is unable to work with Regional TPO's/MPO's. Basically it appears that Florida is NOT officially onboard with Gulf Coast Service Restoration. This information should be passed along to both Senator Nelson and Senator Rubio. There certainly does not appear to be any interest in the CRISI Grant Application opportunity and it is not being encouraged by the FDOT. This basically reconfirms what I was told yesterday by John Robert Smith.

I am copying some of our local officials and State Legislators on this also so someone can talk with Governor Scott. Since the FDOT does not consider Gulf Coast Service Restoration a priority it is not even passing along NOFO's from FRA or USDOT from the Federal Register. None of the TPO's/MPO's contacted by me had even seen or were aware about the CRISI Funding NOFO and Grant availability. If this is going to happen we are going to have to have very explicit buy in from Governor Scott, Senator Rubio and Senator Nelson. With a statewide election coming up in November the Florida Panhandle best not be forgotten.

Very Kind Regards,

Mike

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On Mar 30, 2018, at 12:27 PM, Barnhart, Devon (Commerce) <Devon_Barnhart@commerce.senate.gov> wrote:

Hi Mike,

It was good talking to you yesterday. Let me know how your conversations with Senator Rubio's office go. John Robert Smith works for Transportation for America in Washington, DC, but he is also the former mayor of Meridian, Mississippi and spends a fair amount of his time trying to help restore rail service on the gulf coast with the Southern Rail Commission. His contact is jrsmith@t4america.org. I just shot him an email to let him know that you may be reaching out, so please feel free to tell him that I referred you.

Please let us know if folks decide to put together a grant application for the CRISI grants. The applications are fairly involved, so it will be good to have a really defined project and technical support prior to submitting an application. Here is some [background on the program](#) and here is the [recent federal notice](#) that details [background on the program](#) how funding can be spent and what applicants need to do to apply for the funding.

Hope you have a lovely weekend!

Devon

From: T. Michael Hines <t.michaelhines@embarqmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 30, 2018 7:34 AM
To: Barnhart, Devon (Commerce) <Devon_Barnhart@commerce.senate.gov>
Cc: Gulley, Bryan (Commerce) <Bryan_Gulley@commerce.senate.gov>; Hester, MaryLouise (Bill Nelson) <MaryLouise_Hester@billnelson.senate.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Gulf Wind (CSX) Passenger/Freight Restoration: Appropriations Bill Provision Inserted by Bill Nelson

Devon:

This might be worth discussions with your colleagues and Senator Nelson. Unless we can enlist some level of support from Governor Scott I doubt this will be a very high priority for FDOT.

Thanks for discussing with me. I would be happy to speak with the SRC gentleman you talked with me about if you will help me make contact. I did notice that the SRC Working Group includes a letter of support from Congresswoman Gwen Graham. I believe I can also enlist support from Skip Foster, Publisher of the Tallahassee Democrat. Have also been in touch with Senator Rubio's Office to determine if he will be supportive and hope to hear back from him soon.

Best,

Mike

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t.michaelhines48@gmail.com

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tom Gustafson <tjiscis@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Gulf Wind (CSX) Passenger/Freight Restoration: Appropriations Bill Provision Inserted by Bill Nelson
Date: March 30, 2018 at 6:41:03 AM EDT
To: "T. Michael Hines" <t.michaelhines@embarqmail.com>

I read the documents you referenced below and note two references of interest (associated with the efforts that I assume were undertaken beginning sometime in 2016 or thereafter).

“The SRC has a \$2.45 million unused rail research earmark for the federally designated high speed Gulf Coast corridor and issued a large call in April for applications for these funds to support rail station area development in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.”

“GCWG’s efforts, the SRC and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) are working to repurpose \$2.45 million in unused Railroad Research and Development earmark funds for the federally designated Gulf Coast high-speed rail corridor to support rail safety and station area improvements in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.”

I assume this \$2.45 research and development effort is underway and because it is limited to stations in LA, MS, and AL, I would suggest that the specific request be made to FDOT to undertake a similar research and development effort as to the necessary

Florida rail safety and stations area improvements along the proposed New Orleans to Orlando route.

By this means, Florida will not fall behind other states as to readiness to restart service when the opportunity arises.

Again, you will need to partner with an effective and relentless champion who is positioned within the Legislature or Governor's office to aggressively pursue this agenda (e.g., what I did for I-595 and Sawgrass Expressway financing and development efforts or what Herb Morgan did for "Save the Florida Capital Building" efforts).

I would not discount the opportunity for a local communities engaged effort or private sector-led effort to emerge (e.g., think how Tri-Rail, SunRail, and Brightline passenger rail was developed).

With CSX announcing an interest in selling its rail corridor, an immediate examination of nature of likely transactions CSX might agree upon, would be useful. How might you or others representing one or more of the Capital Region governmental entities (e.g., Tallahassee, Leon County or CRTPA) undertake such a discussion with CSX?

Once you have a better feel of what is involved, someone could look for buyers who will partner with one or more governmental entities within the Capital Region (and eventually the West Florida Region and the First Coast Region).

My advice to North Florida is the same that I give to my friends South and Central Florida:

"No one us going to do this job for you; so you need to go about the business of doing this for yourself."

Feel free to keep me advised; I am more then willing to respond to your inquiries from time to time.

Call me if you want to talk.

Tom Gustafson
954 661-7848

Sent from my iPhone

<http://www.southernrailcommission.org/fra-working-group/>

Begin forwarded message:

From: "T. Michael Hines"
<t.michaelhines@embarqmail.com>
Subject: Gulf Wind (CSX)
Passenger/Freight
Restoration: Appropriations
Bill Provision Inserted by Bill
Nelson
Date: March 29, 2018 at 1:49:53
PM EDT
To: Devon Barnhart
<Devon_Barnhart@commerce.senate.gov>

Ms. Barnhart:

*Thanks for your telephone call.
Left message for you when I
returned to the house.*

*Wanted you to have my contact
information. I just had a brief
conversation with Senator Rubio's
Tallahassee Staff Director and he
has sent inquiry to DC Office to
determine Senator Rubio's position
and willingness to assist us.*

*Look forward to speaking with
you.*

Very Kind Regards,

Mike

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