Governor Mike Parson

P.O. Box 720
Jefferson City, MO 65102

RE: River Runner passenger train round trip daily service reduction

Governor Parson~

Recently it was reported by KSHB TV that Missouri legislators informed MODOT that they wanted the River Runner cut from two round trip frequencies to one.

The reason? They say they don’t want to incur any more debt.

MODOT and certain legislators are, in fact inaccurately characterizing a $2.5 million shortfall as debt. The shortfall is itself manufactured. Take a look at the Economic Impact Analysis of the Missouri River Runner from 2021: [Passenger Rail Plan | Missouri Department of Transportation (modot.org)](https://www.modot.org/passenger-rail-plan)

As you can see, at two daily frequencies the River Runner generates $22M in federal, state and local taxes. Based on the experience of other states with state-supported corridors, the $2.5M “debt” MODOT refers to is the difference between revenues and operational expenses. The remaining $2.5M could easily be paid for by tapping into the $22M in taxes generated by the service itself. In fact, based on this information - revenues generated by ticket sales, food sales on the train, etc. and the state’s portion of $22M in generated taxes – ***Missouri is in the black***.

What’s clear is that MODOT has mischaracterized the situation and isn’t doing what’s best for Missourians. Neither are the “legislators” that instructed MODOT to cut back on service.

As Governor, you can rectify the situation by asking staff to draft legislation that identifies and redirects state tax revenue generated by the train service to cover all operational costs. This is what would serve Missourians.

Sincerely,

cc: cc:

MODOT KSHB

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