



HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

State of Oklahoma

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Oklahoma House of Representatives, specifically The Passenger Rail Caucus, is pleased to offer support for the Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT) application for the Heartland Flyer Extension to be accepted into the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation has worked closely with KDOT to prepare this application and is looking forward to seeing successful acceptance into the Corridor ID program. This important corridor from Oklahoma City to Newton, KS extends the popular line from Fort Worth, TX to Oklahoma City on to an important northern Amtrak connection in Newton, allowing residents and businesses in Oklahoma a great transportation option and further connecting us to our Midwestern neighbors.

The Interstate 35 corridor, which includes Central and North Central Oklahoma, is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. With more than 40 million people, 10 million jobs and a 28 percent growth rate, the I-35 corridor stretching from Laredo, TX to Kansas City, MO is one of the hottest economic development markets regionally and nationally. Oklahoma City, Edmond, Guthrie, Perry and Ponca City – planned as new stops for the Heartland Flyer Extension – are well-positioned to support impressive growth and economic activity in the years to come. The Heartland Flyer Extension will add to that economic development portfolio, reduce stress on I-35, improve transportation efficiency and safety for rural and urban users, and stimulate commerce in the region.

Today, Oklahoma City is a passenger rail cul-de-sac; a great end destination that is, unfortunately, closed off from neighboring communities to the north. As one of only a handful of U.S. cities to have grown by more than 100,000 residents in the past decade, the city needs transportation infrastructure to keep pace with this tremendous growth. The Central and North Central Oklahoma regions are strong economic activity centers for aviation and aerospace, bioscience, energy and the related industries of construction, retail and services to support the community. Oklahoma welcomes this growth and believes the Heartland Flyer Extension will have positive impacts on our State.

In closing, as the House Passenger Rail Caucus Chair, I would encourage your serious consideration of the Heartland Flyer Extension's application for the Corridor ID program and look forward to the further development of the project with the support of the Federal Railroad Administration's resources and technical expertise.

Sincerely,

Representative Ken Luttrell
House District 37