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**SOUTHERN RAPID RAIL TRANSIT  
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April 25, 2007

Mr. Alexander Kummant  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Railroad Passenger Corporation  
60 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Kummant:

The Southern Rapid Rail Transit Commission met last Friday, April 20, 2007. Mr. Drew Galloway, Chief of Corridor Development for Amtrak, presented confirmed costs relative to new corridor service between New Orleans and Mobile. While these final costs are in-line with his preliminary estimates presented October 20, 2006 our commission is concerned that the Amtrak Board will institute the 180 day notice for the Sunset Limited east of New Orleans before the hard issues about new corridor service have been thoroughly discussed. Frankly, the lack of initiative by Amtrak to assume responsibility for the critical aspect of transitioning from one service to another, in partnership with Southern Rapid Rail Transit Commission and the four states impacted prior to decommissioning, is perplexing.

We have an immediate concern that noticing the Sunset service east of New Orleans would potentially eliminate access to the CSXT mainline between New Orleans and Jacksonville for any future service. Secondly, it is clear that transition from our former federally funded long-distance service to state subsidized twice daily corridor service will require a deliberate, multi-year marketing campaign to make the necessary cultural shift to secure the funding necessary for long-term success. Success can only occur by fully educating lawmakers, communities on the route and residents across the states.

While a \$2 million per state annual subsidy is not unbearable, the underlying cultural shift required of state decision-makers is daunting. A substantial change in thinking is needed to adequately value the service and achieve stable, long-term local funding sources, as your organization is well aware, having combated this very issue for many years under changing political sentiments and an auto centric society. The task is large and we believe, will require a long-term commitment by both Amtrak and SRRTC.

Southern Rapid Rail Transit Commission formally requests the following:

- 1) Amtrak's commitment to work with us to establish a holistic transition program that will provide; development of critical political and social behavior modification strategies to transition to state supported service, development of an implementation schedule linked to state budget cycles, and agreement with CSXT on a set of infrastructure improvements
- 2) Restoration of the Sunset Limited until permanent corridor service is in place. As our previous resolution to you indicates we believe restoring the train along its complete route should be part and parcel of an alternative service package. The Commission is amenable to and will encourage evaluating service modifications that provide more efficient operations and greater public benefits
- 3) Begin immediate planning of new corridor service between New Orleans and Mobile comprised of two trains per day/seven days per week. Schedule a meeting between SRRTC and you and appropriate staff at Amtrak to set the strategy and timeline to re-establish service and accomplish our long-term objectives.

Please note many of the communities served by the Sunset were devastated by Hurricane Katrina. In the post-Katrina environment, basic services most communities take for granted remain insufficient and the many worthy projects that have been identified compete for state resources. In addition, the municipalities, having experienced great loss, have a limited capacity to respond to the stoppage of the Sunset. The federal government must take responsibility to represent the best interests of the Gulf Coast residents to provide mobility and access as mandated in SAFETEA-LU and to adequately represent the most disenfranchised among it citizens.

Just as Southern Rapid Rail Transit Commission has advocated for a long-term funding source and a comprehensive federal policy for Amtrak, we hope Amtrak will work with Southern Rapid Rail to support our strategic long-term goals. In the end, I believe our goals are mutually beneficial and I am hopeful we can partner in this endeavor.

I look forward to your reply,

Sincerely,



Karen Parsons  
Executive Director

Copies to:

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