



505 Capitol Court, NE, Suite 300 • Washington, DC 20002-7706
P:: 202.408.8362 • F:: 202.408.8287 • E:: narp@NARPrail.org

3-8-2017

HOUSE
Rep. Richard Corcoran
House Speaker

Rep. Ray Rodrigues
House Majority Leader

Rep. Janet Cruz
House Minority Leader

SENATE

Sen. Joe Negron
Senate President

Wilton Simpson
Senate Majority Leader

Oscar Braynon II
Senate Minority Leader

The National Association of Railroad Passengers would like to express our opposition to SB 386 & HB 269, which unfairly targets All Aboard Florida's Miami - Orlando Brightline passenger rail project.

There are tremendous benefits this private-sector passenger rail project would bring—not just for the four connected communities—Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, and Orlando—but the entire state. The project will create 10,000 direct construction jobs, and hundreds more permanent operating and maintenance jobs. That will generate over \$650 million in federal, state, and local tax revenue. It will also take three million automobiles off the crowded Interstate 95 corridor. By 2030, Florida will have added six million residents, and the state needs to start expanding infrastructure capacity now.

NARP also opposes government intervention into how this private railroad can develop its property, which is currently an active railroad. These bills also blur the lines of federal and state authority with an ambiguous bill that penalizes both freight and passenger rail for doing business in Florida.

While the bills are being sold as a safety measure, their intent is clear: to attack a private-sector company on behalf of rail opponents who have been unsuccessful in federal and state courts. To use the legislative process to attack one company through punitive and overreaching regulation—while exempting other transportation companies—is unfair to Florida taxpayers who will pay for the additional costs of these new regulations and the years of litigation this bill will surely create.

With work already being undertaken to prepare for the train, it would be foolhardy to throw up poorly-considered regulations that are primarily intended to act as obstacles. Orlando International Airport's new train terminal is currently under construction, and will soon be ready for the first Brightline train,

which will eventually connect with SunRail. And Broward County has already completed an initial review to identify a future station location.

Florida has a chance to lead the way nationally by showcasing a new method of transportation investment. Even libertarian economists, such as the Reason Foundation's Robert Poole, believe that All Aboard Florida has "a sensible business plan" and that "the private sector will bear the risks".

The bills would also seriously harm the efforts to restore rail service to Florida's Gulf Coast communities, which have been disconnected since Hurricane Katrina damaged track and stations in 2005.

In conclusion, NARP respectfully reiterates our request to oppose HB 269 and SB 386.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Mathews", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jim Mathews
President & CEO
National Association of Railroad Passengers

