



*Florida Department of Transportation*

RICK SCOTT  
GOVERNOR

3400 West Commercial Boulevard  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

RACHEL D. CONE  
INTERIM SECRETARY

May 9, 2017

The Honorable Ed Fielding  
District Two - Commissioner  
Martin County  
2401 SE Monterey Road  
Stuart, FL 34996

Dear Commissioner Fielding:

**SUBJECT: US 27 Corridor**

Thank you for your March 30th email regarding recent stakeholder interest in a freight rail project along the US 27 highway corridor. US 27 is a designated Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) highway corridor which serves as a critical truck route for the agricultural community as well as for transporting consumer goods throughout Florida. Over the years, the Florida Department of Transportation (the Department) has conducted numerous multimodal planning studies of the US 27 corridor including the following:

- 2004 US 27 Action Plan
- 2008 US 27 Corridor Multimodal Needs Assessment
- 2010 US 27 Rail Corridor Study Feasibility Assessment
- 2012 Interregional Transportation Infrastructure Needs Study
- 2012-2013 US 27 Multimodal Planning and Conceptual Engineering (PACE) Study, and
- 2013 US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study.

In 2008, the Florida State Legislature authorized the use of funds under Specific Appropriation 2077 directing the Department to conduct a study on the feasibility of a rail corridor along US 27. The US 27 Rail Corridor Study Feasibility Assessment, completed in March 2010, provided a qualitative evaluation of the feasibility of a rail line along the US 27 corridor and identified ten corridor alternatives that were each considered for fatal flaws.

The US 27 Multimodal PACE Study was then conducted to examine the feasibility of a freight rail corridor along 72 miles of US 27 from south of the Homestead Extension of Florida's Turnpike in Miami-Dade County, to the Palm Beach/Hendry County line. The PACE Study includes a forecast of highway and freight traffic demand for a new rail bypass, development of conceptual engineering alternatives, an environmental screening of the rail alignments, cost estimates and coordination with resource agencies and key stakeholders.

The Honorable Ed Fielding

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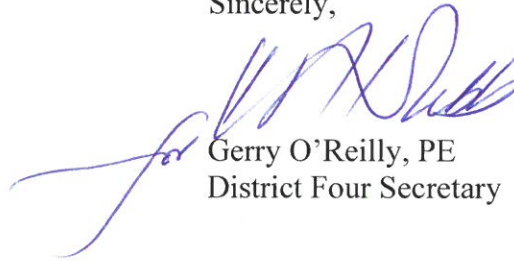
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This study recommended that further engineering work such as Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Studies should begin when one or more Intermodal Logistics Centers (ILCs) in the Glades region is developed, additional roadway capacity is needed, or when additional east coast railroad capacity is needed. This need for additional rail capacity must be identified by those who use rail to ship freight, which would ultimately be a deciding factor in bringing a new western rail project to fruition.

With this in mind, we understand that you are interested in gathering stakeholders to discuss next steps for a potential freight railroad along the US 27 corridor to relieve future congestion from the coastal corridor. As you move forward with this initiative, we recommend that stakeholders should include at a minimum, FDOT, the counties, Metropolitan/Transportation Planning Organizations, seaports, railroad companies, and private industry representatives. The Department will continue to have staff available to participate in future stakeholder meetings.

Thank you for including the Department in your initiative to improve regional transportation for all modes along the coastal corridor.

Sincerely,



Gerry O'Reilly, PE  
District Four Secretary

GO:ld

cc: Lisa Dykstra, P.E., District Transportation Planning Manager, FDOT District Four  
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