

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CHAMBER ALLIANCE OF LAKE COUNTY SUPPORTING THE CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUTER RAIL PROJECT; REQUESTING OF THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE CERTAIN INSURANCE PROVISIONS; SUPPORTING STUDY OF THE "NORTHWEST CORRIDOR," FROM DOWNTOWN ORLANDO INTO LAKE COUNTY, FOR COMMUTER RAIL FEASIBILITY; AND AUTHORIZING CHAIRMAN TO JOIN OTHER COMMUNITIES IN SUPPORT OF COMMUTER RAIL

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is undertaking the development and implementation of the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project running from DeLand in Volusia County through Seminole County, and Orange County (including the Cities of Orlando, Maitland and Winter Park) to Poinciana in Osceola County; and

WHEREAS, FDOT has reached agreement with CSX Transportation providing for the acquisition of the CSXT's A-Line between Milepost A749.7 near DeLand and A814.1 near Poinciana, a distance of approximately 61.5 miles for the use of the Commuter Rail Project; and

WHEREAS, Orange, Seminole, Volusia, and Osceola Counties and the City of Orlando (collectively, the "Local Government Partners") have agreed that the FDOT will be the agency responsible for the design, permitting and construction of the Commuter Rail Project and will be responsible for its operation, management and maintenance for a period of seven years; and

WHEREAS, FDOT has agreed to convey the Commuter Rail Project to the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission (other than the stations, which will be conveyed to the Local Government Partners) after the initial seven years; and

WHEREAS, the Commuter Rail Project is the first piece of a larger transit vision for the entire state, providing possible connections to Lake County and beyond, and is consistent with the statewide rail plan, last updated in 2006; and

WHEREAS, implementation of the Commuter Rail Project will result in overall social and environmental benefits, improve the quality of life in the state, stimulate economic growth, create new employment opportunities, and serve as a positive growth management catalyst; and

WHEREAS, the Commuter Rail Project will greatly benefit all of the citizens of and visitors to the Central Florida region, and is needed in order to relieve traffic congestion, provide transportation opportunities, and provide a relief for I-4 traffic during its reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, the Commuter Rail Project will become an integral part of Central Florida's balanced transportation system and, with concurrent development of improvements to roadways and bus transit, will greatly enhance the mobility of the traveling public; and

WHEREAS, the liability language requested for the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project is consistent with all 23 commuter rail projects throughout the nation and is already in place in Florida for the operation of South Florida's Tri Rail System – and will be a requirement statewide for all future commuter rail systems; and

WHEREAS, financial commitments for the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project have been made by the Local Government Partners and state funding is contained in the Five-Year Work Program of the Florida Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Mica and Congresswoman Brown have pledged to secure more than \$300 million in federal funding for the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project and, if not used for this project, will be lost to rail transit projects elsewhere in the country; and

WHEREAS, it is more critical than ever to provide the traveling public with transportation alternatives as gasoline prices are soaring and new federal air quality standards for ozone put Central Florida at risk of being declared a non-attainment area which could result in sanctions being imposed; and

WHEREAS, the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project will support the efforts of Governor Crist's Energy and Climate Change Action Plan, established by Executive Order 07-128, with ambitious goals for reducing statewide green house gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization has established a partnership with the Florida Central Railroad, which leases and operates rail services along the "Northwest Corridor;" and

WHEREAS, the successful implementation of the 61.5-mile commuter rail spine, along with a favorable feasibility study of the "Northwest Corridor," could enable a regional commuter rail connection to Lake County, with potential stations in the cities of Tavares, Eustis and Mount Dora; and

WHEREAS, a 1999 feasibility study of commuter rail along the "Northwest Corridor" was not favorable during a time Lake County was without fixed-route transit services and without sufficient population numbers to support commuter rail; and

WHEREAS, with the establishment of the LakeXpress fixed-route bus service, which serves potential commuter rail station locations, with the addition of significant urban populations in northern Lake County and with the downtown redevelopment plans of Tavares and Eustis, which incorporate commuter rail stations, an updated feasibility study would likely result in a favorable assessment; and

WHEREAS, the Lake~Sumter MPO is working with the Lake County Board of county Commissioners, as well as the municipalities of Tavares, Eustis and Mount Dora and the Central Florida Railroad, to partner with FDOT, Metroplan Orlando, Orange County, the City of Orlando and the City of Apopka to initiate the update of the Commuter Rail Feasibility Study of the "Northwest Corridor;" and

WHEREAS, formal actions to initiate said feasibility study have been placed on hold until the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project is approved by the Florida Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the Chamber Alliance of Lake County represents the collective membership of the 3,500 member businesses of the eight Lake County chambers of commerce on legislative issues; and

WHEREAS, connection of Lake County to the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project would have long-term benefits to the economy and to the quality of life of Lake County.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Chamber Alliance of Lake County that:

Section 1. The ALLIANCE supports the design, construction, and implementation of the Commuter Rail Project in the Central Florida area; and

Section 2. The ALLIANCE requests the Florida Legislature to approve fair and reasonable insurance provisions for the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project as recommended by the Florida Department of Transportation and consistent with the provisions of the Interlocal Agreement; and

Section 3. The ALLIANCE supports an updated feasibility study of the "Northwest Corridor," with the understanding that formal requests are being withheld until action to approve the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project is taken by the Florida Legislature.

Section 4. The ALLIANCE authorizes Chairman Ron Wallace, or his designee or successor, to join in efforts with other communities and chambers throughout the state to support the project and its future benefits for all of Florida.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Chamber Alliance of Lake County this 21st day of November, 2008.

Ron Wallace, Chairman

Certified:

T.J. Fish, Secretary