

February 12, 2009

Honorable Charlie Crist
Governor of Florida
PL 01 the Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Governor Crist:

I read the letter that Senator Paula Dockery wrote February 3, 2009, to Governor Crist regarding SunRail and the deal between CSX and the state. As President of the League of Women Voters in Orange County, I have made it a priority to stay informed about this project. With all due respect to Senator Dockery, there are inaccuracies throughout her letter. For example:

1. The Senator claims that CSX and FDOT are creating a "freight super-railway" through several cities in the Central Florida Region. I am not sure there is a technical definition of a freight super-railway, but if so, I doubt that making improvements to an existing corridor that will add 11 freight trains by 2030, would qualify. The claim that the CSX deal "could send as many as 54 trains a day through downtown Lakeland" borders on the absurd. The most active rail hub in the country is just outside Chicago and it does not currently run 54 trains per day.

2. Senator Dockery implies the project development process has not been transparent and that "the facts are difficult to find". That has not been my experience. I have seen and discussed with many officials and fellow citizens the terms and conditions of the CSX agreement, interlocal agreements, resolutions and letters of support. I have received numerous communications, factoids, talking points, and I have attended dozens of public meetings and workshops. I have collected a large amount of literature on this project and heard the points made by some who support the project and others who oppose the project because there has been free and open debate about potential impacts. Additionally, such information and varied points of view are well represented on the internet and through other media.

3. The Senator's statement that at \$10.5 million a mile, "Florida is paying the highest rail-sale price in US history" is wrong. The Weber County to Salt Lake City commuter rail project cost \$14 million a mile, the North San Diego County Oceanside Escondido commuter rail system cost \$22 million a mile, also, the proposed Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) commuter rail system is estimated to cost \$22 million per mile. And, these projects are less expensive than the light rail and subway projects now underway in Northern Virginia and New York.

4. The Senator's contention that no federal money has been set aside for the project is inaccurate. SunRail is listed in the Federal Transit Administration's 2008 Annual Report on Funding Recommendations which is an appendix to the President's budget.

There are numerous other misstatements in the Senator's letter but to rebut them all is likely more than you will care to read. However, I have to express concern about the contents and tone of her letter. It is particularly disturbing to read in Senator Dockery's letter, "On a personal level, I've been briefing my colleagues on the CSX deal, one by one. My packet includes documents they've never seen before." I can only wonder at the errors that packet of information may contain if her letter is an indicator. I am also frustrated with the "personal level" and "my" attitude it expresses. The statewide importance of SunRail goes way beyond such thinking. Hopefully, Senator Dockery will make "her" packet available to us all.

I applaud your leadership in moving this project forward. The benefits this project will bring to Florida were beautifully described in your recent press conference with Mayor Dyer and Secretary Kopelousos. It is clear that SunRail makes sense and cents for Florida at a time in our history when both are sorely needed. Thank you Governor.

Sincerely,

Lennon Moore
Winter Park Citizen

Cc: Governor Charlie Crist
FDOT Secretary, Stephanie C. Kopelousos
Members, Florida House and Senate