

March 30, 2009

To Members of the Florida State Senate and House of Representatives:

The Tampa Bay Partnership fully supports the completion of the Central Florida Commuter Rail Project, now known as SunRail.

Transportation alternatives to better move people and goods around our region are a top priority of the Tampa Bay Partnership and many in the Tampa Bay region. Over the past couple of years you have supported this goal, specifically with the creation of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA).

Through the unanimous support we received on TBARTA from the Florida Legislature and from our regional partners, we have come to realize that we are not in this alone. The concerns we have regarding the growing demands on our transportation systems are echoed by partners throughout the state.

Our partners in Central Florida, like Tampa Bay, have struggled with transit for many years. We applaud them for their efforts to bring together diverse communities and secure the local, state and federal funding necessary to create SunRail.

We view SunRail as the start of a statewide transit system and the catalyst that will accelerate our transit plans in Tampa Bay. SB 1212 will finalize SunRail, provide liability coverage that will extend to future projects in our state, and allow Tampa Bay to explore the possibility of utilizing freight lines for passenger movement, which will accelerate our plans and cut our costs considerably. Beyond the liability coverage, we believe that the citizens of our community, many of whom travel to Central Florida often, will see the community and economic benefit of SunRail and not just think of transit as a good idea for Tampa Bay, but will demand it for our region.

Finalizing SunRail is one of the most important items that you will be asked to decide during this legislative session. We, the members of the Tampa Bay Partnership, urge you to make this investment into our state now. **Pass SB 1212 and let SunRail become a reality, so we in Tampa Bay and others around the state can celebrate and capitalize upon this success.**

We the leaders of the Tampa Bay Partnership thank you for your consideration on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us for more information.

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