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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0918

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Denham
Chairman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines & Hazardous Materials
2029 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Safety of All Aboard Florida/Brightline Passenger Rail Project

Dear Chairmen Shuster and Denham:

I write regarding the safety of the All Aboard Florida (AAF)/Brightline passenger rail project. This project is of great concern to many of my constituents, and I share their concerns.

Late last week, AAF/Brightline began running its passenger trains along Phase I (Miami to West Palm Beach). In less than one week, two individuals have been killed by the train. These tragic deaths exemplify the concerns I have with the safety of this project, and **I urge the Committee to hold a hearing to examine these incidents and the safety of AAF/Brightline, including its many at-grade crossings.**

AAF/Brightline trains use the tracks of the Florida East Coast Railway (FECR), meaning higher speed AAF/Brightline trains will be sharing the tracks with longer, slower freight trains. According to fatality reports from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), there have been 105 deaths along the 351 mile FECR corridor since 2011.

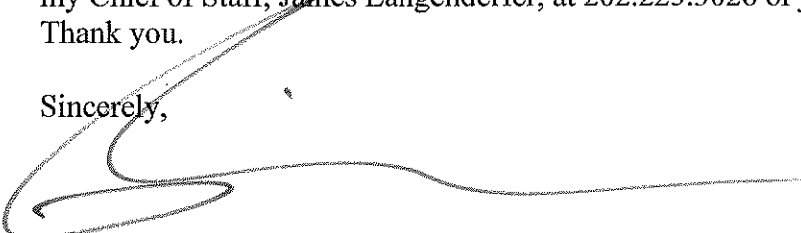
Most recently, since AAF/Brightline began its test runs, there have been four additional fatalities since July 2017 (the most recent two included) when individuals were hit by AAF/Brightline trains.

In addition, it was brought to my attention last year that an AAF/Brightline train derailed during a test run, resulting in \$408,000 of equipment damage. This incident only became public months after it occurred, as the result of a FOIA request.

AAF/Brightline currently has two Private Activity Bond (PAB) allocations from the Department of Transportation (DOT)—\$600 million for Phase I, and \$1.15 billion for Phase II (West Palm Beach to Orlando, the phase of the project that would run directly through my congressional district without stopping). **Before one penny of government subsidized funding is spent on this project, I believe the DOT and our Committee must thoroughly investigate the safety issues related to AAF/Brightline.**

Please let me know at your earliest convenience when the Committee can schedule a hearing on this important rail safety issue. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact me directly, or my Chief of Staff, James Langenderfer, at 202.225.3026 or james.langenderfer@mail.house.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Brian Mast
Member of Congress