



RAPID CITY AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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The Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is writing to express our strong support for a major investment in rail transportation infrastructure. We hereby provide full support and formally request the US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, and FRA (Federal Railroad Administration) Deputy Administrator Amit Bose create a formal FRA Working Group focused on the Greater Northwest Region of the United States. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in our nation's infrastructure. We need a big, bold vision—combined with step-by-step progress. We need collaborations between private companies and government.

Much of rural America is underserved by long-distance intercity passenger rail options, including portions of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The Greater Northwest Passenger Rail Working Group, modeled after the Congressionally established Gulf Coast Working Group, will be convened by the Secretary of Transportation to study and develop service development plans for restoring passenger rail service within the Greater Northwest region as determined by the Working Group. The ultimate goal of the Working Group is to further the economic and social wellbeing of rural America while providing enhanced connectivity for the national long-distance passenger rail system, thereby making the overall system more robust and resilient.

It is time to strengthen our local, state, and national economies with better mobility. Fast, frequent and affordable trains create strong social, family, and business ties by making travel easy and productive. Trains give people a safe way to move around at a low cost—and with a small carbon footprint. Trains create a more enjoyable and prosperous life by supporting walkable and more financially-viable cities and towns. The routes to be considered should link and serve in-common communities, large and small, across states comprising the Greater

Northwest Region. We believe that such service will be transformative, and will provide major economic, environmental, and equity benefits to our community.

We have interest in learning what passenger rail can bring to the Rapid City area. As we continue to grow in population and diversity, our hopes and for economic development, mobility options and transportation equity necessitate multiple options for modes of transportation. The Rapid City area is a popular location for tourism, and adding additional transportation options will provide more opportunities for people to experience the beauty of the Black Hills. Additionally, the region is beginning to experience an increase in manufacturing activity, and additional rail connections can enhance this sector of our growing economy. We request that you support the next steps required to provide passenger rail service by forming this FRA Working Group to develop cost-benefit and economic impact analyses and service development plans.

Sincerely,

Mayor Larry Larson
Chair, Executive Policy Committee
Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization