



TOWN OF EXETER, RI

Received
2/10/17 AW

Lynn M. Hawkins, CMC
Town Clerk
Council Clerk
Probate Clerk

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Exeter, R.I. 02822
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February 7, 2017

Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Exeter Town Council Resolution No. 2017-01 in Opposition to the Federal Railroad Administration Preferred Alternative for the Future Northeast Corridor – Washington, DC, to Boston, MA – Rail Line, Tier 1 Final EIS

Dear Sir or Madam:

At its Regular Meeting of January 3, 2017, the Exeter Town Council unanimously voted to adopt the above-captioned resolution. Please find a copy of same enclosed. The Exeter Town Council respectfully requests your support regarding this resolution.

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Hawkins

LMH:lmh
Enclosure
Copies

U.S. Senator Jack Reed
U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Congressman James Langevin
R.I. Governor Gina Raimondo
R.I. State Senator Elaine Morgan
R.I. State Representative Justin Price
R.I. State Representative Julie Casmiro
Town Council, Town of Charlestown
Town Council, Town of Westerly,
Town Council, Town of Richmond
Town Council, Town of South Kingstown
Exeter Town Council



TOWN OF EXETER, RI

TOWN COUNCIL

Kevin P. McGovern, President
Daniel W. Patterson, Vice President
Calvin A. Ellis
Francis T. Maher, Jr.
Raymond A. Morrissey, Jr.

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND TOWN OF EXETER

RESOLUTION

No. 2017-01

IN OPPOSITION TO THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE FUTURE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR - WASHINGTON, DC, TO BOSTON, MA - RAIL LINE, TIER 1 FINAL EIS

WHEREAS: The Final Environmental Impact Statement released by the Federal Railroad Administration presents a preferred alternative route as part of the proposed upgrade to the Northeast Corridor which includes a section of nearly 13 miles of new rail line in the State of Rhode Island affecting the Towns of Westerly, Charlestown, Richmond, and South Kingstown, as part of the so-called Old Saybrook to Kenyon Bypass; and

WHEREAS: The proposed new rail line will principally affect the Towns of Charlestown and Westerly in Rhode Island, including 5.6 miles in Charlestown; and

WHEREAS: Through lack of specific outreach on the part of the Federal Railroad Administration, the Town of Charlestown, its citizens, and impacted property owners were wholly unaware of the proposed new route alignment through Charlestown, and as a result there were no comments received from the Town or interested parties in Charlestown during the public review and comment period for the Tier 1 Draft EIS last year; and

WHEREAS: The review and outreach that the Town of Charlestown, stakeholders, and active members of the community have undertaken since becoming aware of the project on or about December 18, 2016, is the first such engagement that the community has done; and

WHEREAS: The scope of this project and the impact of the route on the Town of Charlestown is significantly negative, as the proposed rail alignment will:

1. Destroy dozens of private homes
2. Decimate the historic mill villages of Burdickville, Columbia Heights and Kenyon
3. Cross land owned by the Narragansett, a federally recognized Indian Tribe

4. Fragment historic and active farmland
5. Fragment the Francis Carter Preserve, a major land holding of The Nature Conservancy along the Pawcatuck River
6. Pass through and/or destroy numerous publicly and privately owned open space otherwise protected in perpetuity
7. Require several crossings of the Pawcatuck River which has been nominated by Congress as a Wild and Scenic River
8. Lie entirely within the land acquisition and habitat management area of the recently established US Fish and Wildlife Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge
9. Lie entirely within the EPA designated Wood-Pawcatuck Sole Source Aquifer; and

WHEREAS: The Federal Railroad Administration has provided a 30-day waiting period on the Final EIS to allow feedback on the preferred alternative, which ends on January 30, 2017, a period of time which the Town of Charlestown considers inadequate to provide sufficient comments outlining in detail their opposition to the preferred alignment; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Charlestown and other impacted towns will bear a significant burden due to loss of areas of environmental, historic, agricultural, and social importance without commensurate benefits to the community as a whole; and

WHEREAS: The Town Council of the Town of Charlestown has invited neighboring Towns in Washington County to consider a resolution supporting Charlestown's position.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Town Council of the Town of Exeter hereby opposes a change to the railroad alignment and directs that the Exeter Town Clerk forward this resolution to the Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, U.S. Congressman James Langevin, R.I. Governor Gina Raimondo, R.I. State Senator Elaine Morgan, R.I. State Representative Justin Price, R.I. State Representative Julie Casmiro, and the Town Councils of the Towns of Charlestown, Westerly, Richmond, and South Kingstown.

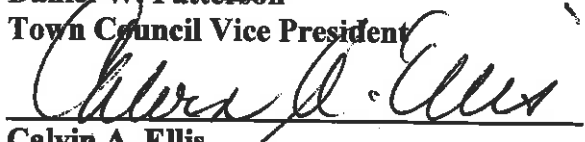
ADOPTED BY VOTE OF THE TOWN OF EXETER TOWN COUNCIL THIS 6TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2017.



Kevin P. McGovern
Town Council President



Daniel W. Patterson
Town Council Vice President



Calvin A. Ellis
Town Council Member

ABSENT FROM MEETING

Francis T. Maher, Jr.
Town Council Member



Raymond A. Morrissey, Jr.
Town Council Member

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HEREBY SET MY HAND AND THE OFFICIAL SEAL OF
THE TOWN OF EXETER THIS 6th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2017.

Lynn M. Hawkins
Lynn M. Hawkins, CMC
Exeter Town Clerk