



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196
401-222-2080

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

February 16, 2016

Ms. Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
U.S. DOT Federal Railroad Administration
One Bowling Green, Suite 429
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Reyes-Alicea:


Please accept the following comments on the Northeast Corridor Rail Line Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (T1-DEIS) on behalf of the State of Rhode Island. Overall, the state is highly supportive of the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) alternatives to grow and transform the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The action alternatives presented would improve the region's global competitiveness, with significant positive impacts on the Northeast's economy, transportation system, and quality of life.

Increasing the speed and frequency of rail service between Boston and Providence is a key priority of the State of Rhode Island, as is improving connectivity to New York and the southern portion of the NEC. An important precondition to that is improving the safety, performance, and reliability of existing rail service on the NEC and bringing the corridor to a state-of-good-repair. Alternative 1 would be the minimum necessary for the NEC to meet these goals. Alternatives 2 and 3 propose significant improvements to rail in the Northeast, including a new connection to Hartford and a high-speed second spine to the NEC.

We believe strongly that the greatest positive regional impact would come from alignments that continue to serve Rhode Island and include Providence as a major hub. A frequent, fast rail connection from Boston to New York, through Providence and Hartford would build upon the region's existing strengths by serving the metropolitan areas where the densest concentrations of populations and jobs already exist and positioning these areas for further economic growth. As a result, Rhode Island would oppose any high speed alternative that does not include Providence.

Attached are additional technical comments on the T1-DEIS prepared by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, Rhode Island Department of Administration, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

Sincerely,



Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Enclosure