



**** A copy of these comments will be submitted online to reduce data entry needs**

Ms. Rebecca Reyes-Alicea
NEC FUTURE Program Manager
Federal Railroad Administration
One Bowling Green, Suite 429
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Rebecca Reyes-Alicea,

Thank you for involving our agency in the public review process for NEC FUTURE. The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) is the statewide public transit provider for Rhode Island. As a stakeholder agency, we remain strongly supportive of the NEC FUTURE project. Increased rail capacity within the Northeast Corridor is crucial to the future development of our state, our region and our nation.

We have reviewed the three Action Alternatives and No-Action Alternative presented in the Tier 1 EIS from our perspective as the public transit authority of Rhode Island. Though each alternative has strengths and weaknesses, we could be supportive of any of the three Action Alternatives. We would not support a no-action alternative due to the strong demonstrated need for additional corridor capacity. Rhode Island sees increased Commuter Rail service within the state as key to our public transit future, which is not possible with existing track infrastructure.

Action Alternative One leaves significant sections of the Northeast Corridor in Rhode Island without additional track. We appreciate that additional train slots can be created without a contiguous additional track across the entire state, but we are also aware that this approach may constrain the number of trains which can be added. For this reason we would be concerned about the utility of Alternative One.

We are concerned that some route options under Alternative Three would build a new high speed route between Hartford and Boston which bypasses Rhode Island entirely. We would not support a routing alternative which bypasses Providence.

Action Alternative Two and those routing alternatives of Action Alternative Three which pass through Providence are most appealing to RIPTA as they will create an entirely separate second spine for high speed trains through the state while simultaneously freeing up significant capacity on the current Northeast Corridor for commuter rail service.

RIPTA recognizes that all of these alternatives may create community disruptions during construction. While RIPTA would like to see these disruptions minimized as much as possible, we stand ready to work with the FRA or responsible agencies to help minimize disruption through the use of our agency's resources.

Sincerely,

Mayor Scott Avedisian
RIPTA Chairman of the Board of Directors

Raymond Studley
RIPTA Chief Executive Officer