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February 16, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Since my election as Florida governor last November, I have been focused on those initiatives and investments that create the best opportunities for job creation over the long-term. In that regard, I am grateful for the time you and your team have spent discussing with me President Obama's high-speed rail program and the rationale for investment both in Florida and across the country.

As you know, my focus has been to ensure that transportation investments in our State reflect the diversity of needs we face – from port facilities and highway and rail connections that drive domestic commerce and international trade, to investments in aviation and transit.

I believe that the dollars being made available for proposed high-speed rail projects are better invested in higher yield projects, like those we have discussed in the past few weeks and that are listed below.

- Dredging improvements to the Jacksonville Port Authority
- Intermodal Container Transfer Facility at Port Everglades
- Dredging improvements at the Port of Miami
- I-295/SR 9A interchange at Heckscher Drive in Duval County
- Improvements to US 331, including a new bridge east of the existing bridge over Choctawhatchee Bay
- Widening I-95 in Martin, St. Lucie, Brevard and Volusia Counties
- Widening I-4 in Orange County
- Improvements to I-395 in Miami-Dade County
- Widening I-275 in Hillsborough County

The long-term job creation opportunities from these projects are greater, the private investment stronger and the economic yield more permanent. Given the limited dollars available, federal investments, rather than generating temporal job

creation, must be directed toward those projects offering real long-term growth potential and a broader return on investment for our economy and our citizens.

The high-speed rail project now targeted for Florida requires the federal government to invest \$2.4 billion in taxpayer money for an 84-mile line from Tampa to Orlando that would likely not pay for itself. Conventional wisdom suggests that this line, like the vast majority of passenger rail lines, will not be economically sustainable, but that potential concessionaires will bid on the line to obtain a right of first refusal to operate the prospective line from Orlando to Miami. However, given that actual rider ship will not be known until well after the capital investment is made, the potential for significant capital and operating cost overruns and the nominal difference in travel times between the cities, it is likely that even with financial guarantees from a private sector builder/operator, moving forward with such a project would likely lead to a financial obligation by the state of Florida in the future. Moreover, there is no indication this investment will provide any meaningful job creation beyond the construction phase, nor will it result in sustainable economic growth opportunities. Put simply, the proposed high-speed rail line is far too uncertain and offers far too little long term benefit for me to consider moving forward and ultimately putting taxpayers at risk during an already challenging fiscal climate.

For the reasons outlined, Florida will not move forward with the high-speed rail project from Tampa to Orlando. However, I do look forward to our continued work together in meeting the broad array of transportation needs in our state as we seek to strengthen our economy for the long-term.

Sincerely,



Governor Rick Scott