

January 26, 2016

Honorable Lawrence "Larry" Grooms, Chairman
Senate Transportation Committee
203 Gressette Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Honorable, Merita "Rita" Allison, Chairman
House Education & Public Works Committee
429 Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: 2015 Rail Plan Report

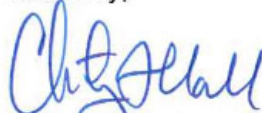
Dear Chairmen:

On behalf of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) please accept the Agency's submittal for the "Rail Plan Report" for 2015. Pursuant to SC Code of Law, Sections 57-3-30 (A) (5), the Office of Railroads – an office within the Division of Intermodal and Freight Programs at SCDOT- prepares this report for the Senate Transportation and House Education & Public Works committees.

The Rail Plan Report provides an analysis of the South Carolina Statewide Rail Plan (SRP) in two parts: (a) state railroad corridor preservation and revitalization plan; and (b) the comprehensive state rail plan for passenger and freight railroads and infrastructure services. To address these requirements, the SRP and 2015 Rail Plan Implementation Update are enclosed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Christy A. Hall, P.E.
Interim Secretary of Transportation

CAH/scj

cc: Nikki R. Haley, Governor of South Carolina
ec: SCDOT Commissioners



2015 Rail Plan Implementation Update January 2016

- The South Carolina Statewide Rail Plan (SRP) was approved by the SCDOT Commission as part of the South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan on December 4, 2014. SCDOT is South Carolina's "State Rail Transportation Authority" as defined by the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). SCDOT ensures that the SRP documents the state's policy on freight and passenger rail transportation – including commuter rail – within the State's boundaries, establishes priorities and implementation strategies to enhance rail service in the public interest, and serves as the basis for Federal and State rail investment.
- The SRP was approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on April 13, 2015.
- The Carolina Southern Rail Line in the Conway area was purchased by R.J. Corman Railroad Group after having been out of service for many months. Repairs and upgrades are being made to the corridor and should be completed by Spring 2016.
- SCDOT, through our Office of Railroads, applied for FRA Safety Grants for two Class III Short Line Railroads for infrastructure improvement projects in November 2015. Staff currently awaits a final decision on funding by FRA.
- The Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP), developed through a tri-state coordinated effort of Georgia DOT, NCDOT and SCDOT, with Georgia DOT leading the effort and SCDOT a non-funding partner, is 75% complete. The PRCIP, including a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), is an extension of the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR), which is under development from Charlotte to Washington, D.C. The extension from Charlotte would travel southeast through portions of South Carolina and into Atlanta. The Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provides an analysis of the proposed project at a broad scale. The Tier 1 EIS describes the need for and purpose of the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP project, and it identifies potential route alternatives, station locations and levels of additional, new train service.
- FRA selected the Southeast region for a fully-funded, USDOT-led, Southeast Multi-State Rail Planning Study in July 2015. This effort will facilitate coordination with neighboring states and will assist with funding for freight and passenger rail projects in the state. FRA's effort will begin in the 1st quarter of 2016 with SCDOT serving as a member of the project Steering Committee.

