

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write in support of the Kansas Department of Transportation and their application for the Heartland Flyer Extension to be accepted into the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program, which is being jointly pursued with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and Texas Department of Transportation.

The current line of the Heartland Flyer runs twice-daily passenger rail service between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Fort Worth, Texas and provides an invaluable connection to the cross-country Amtrak network. The proposed northern extension of the line would connect Oklahoma City to Newton, Kansas, adding an important connection in Wichita, Kansas and connecting other communities along the I-35 Corridor to the national passenger rail network via the Southwest Chief. The long-awaited, full re-connection of this corridor would provide increased transportation choices, reduce congestion and enhance economic opportunity for rural and urban residents and businesses alike. With its long-term value of boosting economic growth within the booming I-35 Corridor megaregion and its near-term benefit of improving the Amtrak National system, acceptance into the Corridor ID program is the first step in this vital 400-mile re-connection.

Restoring the Heartland Flyer between Texas and Kansas through Oklahoma is also an important means of fully connecting the nation's fastest-growing economic development corridor along I-35 from Laredo, Texas to Kansas City, Missouri. This area is home to more than 40 million people, 10 million jobs and boasts a 28 percent growth rate. This safe, efficient and strongly desired extension to the more northern cross-country Southwest Chief would also allow for daily round trips between Fort Worth, Texas and Chicago, Illinois. We also look forward to continued dialogue with local stakeholders, to ensure no disruption to the current and future volumes of freight running through this important corridor.

The Heartland Flyer Extension has tremendous public support, including the full support of more than 20 Chambers of Commerce in the region, the Kansas and Oklahoma Departments of Transportation and is included on both the Kansas and Oklahoma state rail plans. The Kansas Congressional Delegation believes that the proposed Heartland Flyer Extension is a strong candidate for the Corridor ID program and looks forward to the further development of the project with the support of the Federal Railroad Administration's resources and technical expertise.

Thank you for your consideration of their application.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Sharice Davids
Member of Congress



Ron Estes
Member of Congress