

December 16, 2014

Dave Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
ATTN: Environmental Filing,
Docket No. FD 35852
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky,

I am writing in concern over the Port Canaveral Cargo Rail Extension in its current proposed state. The issues I have with this plan are numerous, but I would appreciate the following specific concerns be addressed in your final draft of the EIS.

Recreation: The waters around and in the path of the rail plan in its current state are commonly used for recreation by locals and visitors. How will this rail affect the islands popular for swimming, fishing, and boating? What will be the plan for returning these areas to a usable condition in case of spill? How will the schedule affect usage during construction and operations? How will this operation affect the passage of vessels to the Canaveral lock during construction and operation? Will this impede sail boat traffic to the No-Motor-Zone (NMZ)? Will this impede access of non-motorized vessels to the East Side launch of the NMZ? How will this plan affect passage on the West shore adjacent to the NMZ? Will Kayakers and canoers be forced to the middle (bridge) of a dangerous open river to get from one side to the other on both the west and east shores?

Noise and Vibration: All of the land that the current rail plan will be building on and converting into industrial (RAIL) use is part of the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge. This ecological location generates a large boost for our economy with (but not limited to) fishing, birding, hiking, biking, boating, eco-tour, kayaking, and wildlife drive activities. How will this noise from the projected plans affect visitors to the natural areas? Will prime wildlife viewing areas be affected by noise of this plan? Will the KARS Park area be severely affected by the noise and vibration of passing trains? How will neighborhoods on north Merritt Island and other towns down-rail be negatively affected by new rail noise or increased rail traffic in already developed sections? I would also like to know what affects these vibrations and noise have on shore birds like Great Egret, osprey, bald eagle, Great Blue Heron, American Bittern, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron, Least Bittern, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbill, White Ibis, Ibis, Belted Kingfisher? This includes feeding, breeding, nesting, and roosting pattern interruptions. How does the vibration affect breeding boney fishes like the Spotted Seatrout, redfish, snook, tarpon, bullshark, blackdrum, sheepshead, pinfish, stripped mullet, silver/white mullet, pigfish, Atlantic croaker, spadefish, goby's, pipefish, Menhaden, bull minnows, southern kingfish, weakfish, sandperch, sand trout, sea robin, and

triple tail? How will reduced breeding affect tourism, recreational, charter, commercial fishing industries?

Economic: Florida's 2.7 million acres of seagrass supports both commercial and recreational fisheries that provide a wealth of benefits to the state's economy. Adding the economic value of the nutrient cycling function of seagrasses, commercial harvests, eco-tourism, and the value of recreational/charter fisheries the FDEP has estimated that each acre of seagrass in Florida has an economic value of approximately \$20,500 per year. Adding to that, the realization that the north Banana River is the last stronghold of healthy on the entirety of that lagoon; the \$20,500 would certainly grow to an unknown number! Many of our lagoon seagrass beds have vanished or are vanishing at an alarming rate! What is the economic impact of the seagrass beds that will be covered or filled over by the construction of this railway? What are the projected economic losses from a spill of the expected cargo (and future potential cargo) due to seagrass loss? What will the lack of flow from any earthen causeway do to this vital link in the lagoons chain? What impact will loss of seagrass in the north banana river lagoon have on the lagoon in its entirety? What impacts will the loss of this habitat so close to port Canaveral have on offshore species of fish like cobia, triple tail, mangrove snapper, black grouper, gag grouper, scamp grouper, bull sharks, lemon sharks, bonnethead sharks, greater hammerhead sharks, endangered Goliath grouper, and endangered American Red snapper's life cycles; including breeding, refuge, and migratory patterns? What are some of the commercial and recreational fishing economic impacts associated with a decline of those offshore species that utilize with the lagoon at some point in their life cycle? How will this plan affect other lagoon residents vital to recreational, charter, and commercial fishing industries like the Spotted Seatrout, redfish, snook, tarpon, bullshark, black drum, sheepshead, pinfish, striped mullet, silver/white mullet, pigfish, Atlantic croaker, spadefish, goby's, pipefish, Menhaden, bull minnows, southern kingfish, weakfish, sandperch, sand trout, and triple tail?

Safety: A spill from the cargo containers or a derailment would be hazardous to the river and the residential communities along the east side of SR3. There are no alternative emergency exits from several roads such as Hall Road. Acts of terrorism is another concern on KSC property. This is a threat to national security and would result in a catastrophic event.

Land Use: How will the rail line, berm, and trestle impact the flooding on North Merritt Island where there is currently severe drainage problems that result in flooding of homes? The Brevard County Commissioners recently approved for a development study to be performed on North Merritt Island as a result of the severe drainage problems.

Biological Resources: A berm/trestle running across the Banana River will have a negative impact to the sea grasses, wildlife, fisheries, marine mammals, endangered species, etc. Due to the serious problems in our Indian River Lagoon, The St. Johns River Water Management District's Governing Board approved to provide \$500,000 for restructuring the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRL NEP).

http://webapub.sjrwmd.com/agws10/news_release/ViewNews.aspx?nrd=nr14-085

As a concerned citizen I ask the Surface Transportation Board be diligent in investigating these and the many other issues being presented against the proposed rail project. This should also include the projected growth and increased rail traffic the Port Authority will adopt! I believe a thorough EIS is necessary to determine if the true cost of this current plan is worth the above mentioned negative impacts.

The 528 corridor seems to be the best and only option available that would not have drastic impacts on our already fragile lagoon and refuge. A shared rail system for both people and cargo would provide the necessary transportation for all interested parties, while resulting in less negative impact to the entire community and the environment.

It is worth protecting the environment from the negative impact the proposed rail would have and the 3.7 Billion our lagoons and refuge bring this economy.

Sincerely,

Susan Smith
4072 Sand Ridge Drive
Merritt Island, FL 32953