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February 12th, 2016

Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Docket No. EP 726
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

To Whom It May Concern,

I write this letter today to add my public comment to the Surface Transportation Board's (STP) proposed rule to define "On-time Performance" (OTP) for intercity passenger rail. I represent the 23rd District in the Michigan State Senate, which includes the city of East Lansing and a recently-renovated Amtrak station.

In addition to the \$6.3 million that was recently invested in the station renovation, part of the Capital Area Multimodal Gateway, Michigan also annually invests \$25 million into its annual operating contract with Amtrak, and therefore our community has a strong interest in the success of our state's rail programs.

Recent studies have shown that a slight dip in ridership in 2015 can be attributed to two major factors: low gas prices, which are encouraging many potential riders to drive instead, and on-time performance, upon which the STP can exert more direct control.

Because many passengers do not ride the entire length of the rail route, I believe strongly that the STB definition should consider OTP for intermediate stations along the route, and not simply the final destination. Because of the complexity of connecting train and bus schedules, it is critical that East Lansing passengers can count on accurate arrival times, regardless of whether they are riding as daily commuters or as tourists. A more accurate definition of OTP that includes intermediate locations throughout the rail route will result in better performance, increased ridership and passenger satisfaction, and a better use of state and federal dollars.

Thank you for your consideration.

Curtis Hertel Jr.
State Senator
The 23rd District