



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

COMMITTEES:
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Environment, and General Government, *Chair*
Children, Families, and Elder Affairs, *Vice Chair*
Appropriations
Environment and Natural Resources
Health Policy

SENATOR DEBBIE MAYFIELD

17th District

July 3, 2019

Secretary Kevin Thibault
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Virgin Trains Phase II Construction Plans

Dear Secretary Thibault,

As you are aware during your confirmation hearing with the Florida Senate I voiced my concerns regarding the safety measures and the lack of cooperation between Virgin Trains USA (AKA Brightline/All Aboard Florida). At the time you indicated that safety would be your number one concern as well and that you would work with our local government to ensure the safety of our citizens. On Monday, June 24, 2019, Virgin Trains hosted it's ceremonial groundbreaking event showcasing plans to move forward with phase two of construction for their project.

The announcement of this groundbreaking is extremely concerning considering the lack of information we have received regarding construction plans and the implementation of safety improvements, both of which have been promised by Virgin Trains USA. For the past two and a half years Virgin Trains has submitted the same iteration of their original plans which our county administrators have continuously regarded as incomplete.

In addition to the inadequate updated construction plans submitted to our local governments there is a general lack of communication in order for a project of this magnitude to move forward in a safe and effective manner.

REPLY TO:

- 900 East Strawbridge Avenue, Melbourne, Florida 32901 (321) 409-2025 FAX: (888) 263-3815
- 1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida 32960 (772) 226-1970
- 322 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5017

Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

BILL GALVANO
President of the Senate

DAVID SIMMONS
President Pro Tempore

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On multiple occasions, our local government officials have requested updated plans and coordination from this private for-profit company and have failed to receive adequate or appropriate information. I want to remind you that under section 6B.01 (2G) of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), adopted by your department pursuant to the authority and direction set forth in section F.S. 316.0745, "early coordination with officials having jurisdiction over the affected cross streets and providing emergency services should occur if significant impacts to roadway operations are anticipated." This requirement adopted by your department has gone completely ignored.

The lack of coordination and communication on behalf of Virgin Trains USA is not only unacceptable but should cause great concern from your department while overseeing the safety and management of this project. I have attached documentation from our local government expressing the concerns that is addressed in this letter [Exhibit A – Memo and Letter from Indian River County Public Works Department, and Exhibit B – Brevard County Administrators correspondence].

As construction moves forward, I hope you take the shortfalls set forth in this letter as well as in the documentations attached from our local government into very serious consideration. Florida Department of Transportation should take an active role in ensuring that the requested information by our local government is not only provided but executed accordingly.

I appreciate your attention to this matter of great important. I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Debbie Mayfield
State Senator, District 17

CC: Stephanie Kopelousos, Director of Legislative Affairs
Mike Shannon, Secretary, FDOT District 5
Gerry O'Reilly, Secretary, FDOT District 4
John Denninghoff, Brevard Assistant County Manager
Jason Brown, Indian River County Administrator
Dylan Reingold, Indian River County Attorney