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March 14, 2019

Kevin J. Thibault, PE
Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

Re: Safety Concerns Related to the Brightline Higher-speed Rail Project

Dear Secretary Thibault:

As Chairman of the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and key members of your staff on March 27th in Tallahassee concerning the Brightline higher-speed rail project. We have been trying to have a real conversation with FDOT about our concerns with the safety of this project, without success, for a number of years. Prior to the start of Brightline's operations it might have been said that our concerns for the safety of our residents were speculative. With 16 Brightline deaths and multiple injuries it is now clear that our concerns are real and significant.

I will note that in addition to the deaths and injuries caused by Brightline, the State's October 31, 2018, OPPAGA report, "Florida Passenger Rail System Study," makes multiple important points. I will mention just three:

1. Florida's passenger rail system average fatality rate is 3.5 times higher than the overall national rate.
2. There is a gap in federal and state regulations governing higher-speed rail operations, and
3. "FDOT can also implement federal guidelines as state-level regulations."

It is important to realize that in Brightline's south Florida operations the trains travel at less than 80 MPH. If the rail service is extended through the Treasure Coast it will be traveling through our downtowns at speeds up to 110 MPH. Deaths will continue to mount.

As a county commissioner I have watched FDOT and our MPO work together to build safer roads and I believe it when an FDOT official says, referring to the state road system, "safety is our first priority." I look forward to beginning the dialogue about the safety of Brightline with you in Tallahassee on March 27th and hope to continue the conversation on the Treasure Coast at a future convenient date.

We look forward to working with you and the Department of Transportation to save lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob".

Bob Solari, Chairman

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