

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

July 13, 2021

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I would like to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a plan to reintroduce passenger rail services in a heavily utilized corridor in the southern region of Montana that follows the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979.

My understanding is that the project advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life, and economic competitiveness. It also fulfills a secondary criteria that requires a broad partnership of stakeholders to support the effort. I am impressed that currently 13 Montana counties have committed resources and staff to the effort, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the BSPRA.

More specifically, the BSPRA proposal would study feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach, and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable, and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

Adding passenger rail services to this busy corridor will not only enhance economic opportunity but also reduce the number of vehicles on the road and increase safety for local residents and tourists making their way to key destination points along the corridor to live and to recreate.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the USDOT, and I encourage you to fund this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Gianforte".

Greg Gianforte
Governor

United States Senate

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during a time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing, and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the US DoT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills the secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

Thank you for your attention to this application. If I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would also appreciate you informing my office of the eventual decision on this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon Tester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jon Tester
United States Senator

United States Senate

July 9, 2021

Honorable Secretary Pete Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

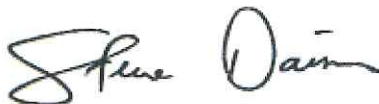
I am writing to you in support of Park County, Montana, in partnership with Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority's (BSPRA), application for federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant funding for a passenger rail Socio-Economic Planning Study.

The study seeks to produce a Socio-Economic Plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a high vehicular use corridor in the southern region of Montana, that would follow the same route used when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The study would highlight feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, estimated capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana.

If the application is successful, funds will be used to conduct a Socio-Economic Planning Study with ultimate goal of creating safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

I trust you will give this application fair and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines
United States Senator

Missoula County Commissioners

Mailing Address: 200 West Broadway
Physical Address: 199 West Pine
Missoula, MT 59802-4292

P: 406.258.4877 | F: 406.258.3943
E: bcc@missoulacounty.us



BCC 2021-161
June 29, 2021

Secretary Peter Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As the Missoula Board of County Commissioners, we are writing to express our support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during the eight-years when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for the state, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

The BSPRA is comprised of counties that represent urban and rural areas, all united around the desire to see passenger rail restored to southern Montana. The restoration of the North Coast Hiawatha route would provide significant environmental and economic benefits to not only Missoula County but to all of southern Montana. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

David Strohmaier

16ACE081F2505A3A08967F7EBBB9C812
Dave Strohmaier, Chair

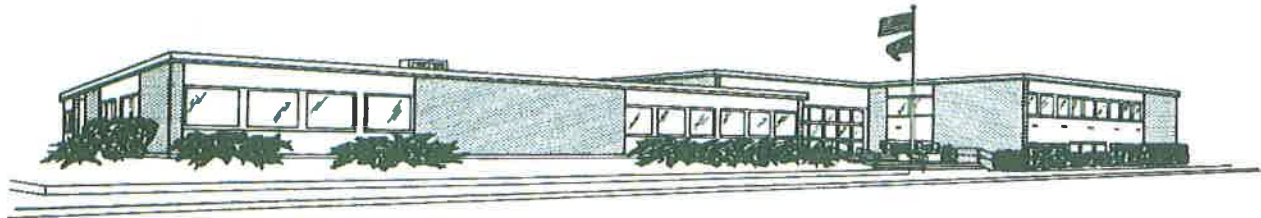
Josh Slotnick

137D51E068F022448FA409545EBD0C66F
Josh Slotnick, Commissioner

Juanita Vero

61222222174920052068000000000000
Juanita Vero, Commissioner

BCC/VP



<p>County Commissioners Phone 377-3562 Dennis Zander, Chairman Joe Sharbono, Member Brad Mitchell, Member</p>	<p>County of Dawson 207 W. Bell Glendive, MT 59330 www.dawsoncountymontana.org</p>	<p>Clerk and Recorder Phone 377-3058 Shirley Kreiman County Treasurer Phone 377-3026 Vickie Boje</p>
--	--	--

July 6, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

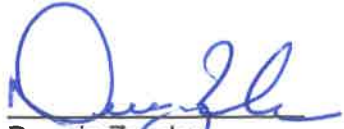
Dear Mr. Secretary:


The Dawson County Board of Commission would like to show our support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service once again through southern Montana.

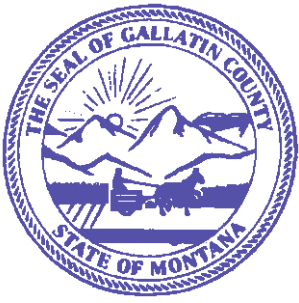
Dawson County has joined the Big Sky Rail Authority in order to start the process of restoring a southern passenger rail service through Montana. This request by Park County meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. DoT and we would very much appreciate your consideration of their request, as it is a important step in getting passenger rail service through some of the most populace cities in Montana, East to West.

Sincerely;
Dawson County Board of Commissioners


Dennis Zander,
Chairman


Joe Sharbono,
Member

- ABSENT -
Brad Mitchell,
Member



GALLATIN COUNTY

311 West Main, Rm. 306 • Bozeman, MT 59715
commission@gallatin.mt.gov

County Commission

Scott MacFarlane
Joe P. Skinner
Zach Brown

Phone (406) 582-3000

July 1, 2021

Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As the Chair for the Gallatin County Commission, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and I would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

Scott MacFarlane, Chair
Gallatin County Commission



Office of
The Board of County Commissioners
Granite County

Post Office Box 925, Philipsburg, Montana 59858-0925

Telephone 406-859-7022 Assistant 406-859-7023 Fax 406-859-3817 Website www.co.granite.mt.us

Blanche McLure, Commissioner
P O Box 73
Philipsburg, MT 59858

Scott C. Adler, Commissioner
750 Frontage Road West
Drummond MT 59832

Charles L. Hinkle, Chairperson
53 Aspen Drive
Philipsburg MT 59858

July 6, 2021

Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Board of County Commissioners, representing the people of Granite County, Montana, want to convey support for the Park County / Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

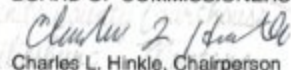
The Park County / BSPRA proposal request funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable, and affordable inter-city, long distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

Granite County Montana is basically a rural county having two towns surrounded by a lot of wide open country. It's mostly dependent on a seasonal economy and services. We have no commercial airports or inter-city bus services. Restoring passenger rail service to Southern Montana would be the first step in providing more mobility, accessibility and options for all rural intercity travelers as well as developing more economic possibilities. Hopefully, the next step would be to restore passenger rail service within Granite County and between our towns.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the US Department of Transportation and we would appreciate your consideration of this request.

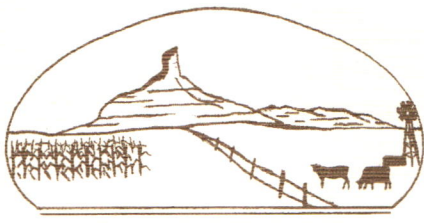
Yours Truly,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF GRANITE COUNTY


Charles L. Hinkle, Chairperson

Scott Adler, Commissioner


Blanche McLure, Commissioner



Prairie County
Montana

Board of County Commissioners
P.O. Box 125 • Terry, MT 59349

Phone: (406) 635-5575 • Fax: (406) 635-5576 • Email: CR@PrairieCounty.org

Re: Railroad Authority

The Prairie County Commissioners are in full support of getting passenger train service on Montana's south rail line.

Prairie County is the home of elderly residents. Our average age is one of the oldest in the United States. Reasonable transportation options, currently, are by automobile only for all our residents.

Being an elderly population, a larger than average percentage of our population do not have the ability to travel to another community by themselves due to their physical and mental restrictions that may forbid them from traveling via passenger car without assistance. We have no bus service and to travel by air our constituents have to travel 175 miles to the nearest commercial flight airport. Due to age, Prairie County residents do not have the flexibility or mobility as compared to most other communities.

Because of less demand of coal, use of the southern line has dramatically reduced rail traffic making room for other uses such as passenger train.

Passenger train would be a huge asset to our elderly population for either points of final destination or linking to other means of transportation to final destination.

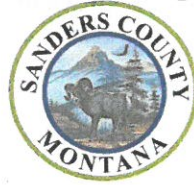
Again, we wholeheartedly support.

Board of County Commissioners
Deanna Bockness • Todd Devlin • Dennis Teske

SANDERS COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

1111 Main Street • P.O. Box 519 • Thompson Falls, Montana 59873

Glen E. Magera, Presiding Officer
Carol Brooker, Commissioner
Anthony B. Cox, Commissioner



Telephone (406) 827-6942
Fax (406) 827-4388
co.sanders.mt.us

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Sanders County, Montana Board of Commissioners wishes to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Sanders County would appreciate your consideration on this request.

Sincerely,



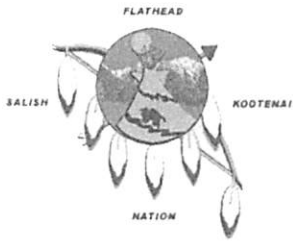
Glen E. Magera, Presiding Officer
District No. 2



Carol Brooker, Commissioner
District No. 1



Anthony B. Cox, Commissioner
District No. 3



THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION

P.O. BOX 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 275-2700
FAX (406) 275-2806
www.cskt.org



A People of Vision

A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreille
and Kootenai Tribes

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shelly R. Fyant - Chairwoman
Anita L. Matt - Vice Chair
Ellie Bundy McLeod - Secretary
Martin Charlo - Treasurer
Len Two Teeth
D. Fred Matt
Carole Lankford
James "Bing" Matt
Charmel R. Gillin
Mike Dolson

July 9, 2020

Dear Missoula County Commissioners,

Transportation issues remain a long-standing concern on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The loss of Montana's passenger rail service in 1979 has had a significant impact on our community.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes understand that in Montana, the legislature has granted counties the power under MCA 7-14-16 to establish regional railway authorities. CSKT's Tribal Council supports the creation of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority.

CSKT agrees that in the context of COVID-19 economic recovery, the passenger rail presents a significant opportunity to provide enhanced transportation, but it would also provide opportunities for business expansion and development across the state.

The Flathead Indian Reservation is larger than the state of Rhode Island with 1.3 million acres and overlays four counties; Lake, Flathead, Sanders and Missoula. Our Tribes' have a transportation system to help everyone travel to work, school, medical appointments and grocery shopping. Transportation issues have been identified as a barrier for some families. Our community would benefit greatly from enhanced transportation options.

Consider the Tribal Council representing the Selis, Ksanka, Qlispe people as supporters of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority.

Respectfully,

CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES

Shelly R. Fyant, Chairwoman
Tribal Council



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

435 RYMAN MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802-4297 (406) 552-6001

July 9, 2021

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As Mayor of the City of Missoula, Montana, I am writing to express my support for Park County and the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority's (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

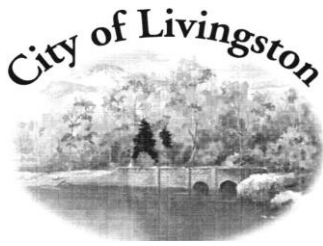
The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

The City of Missoula supports President Biden's vision to expand funding for passenger rail in the United States, and we support the Park County/BSPRA planning study to lay the groundwork for restoration of passenger rail through southern Montana. Long-distance passenger rail service provides a vital public transportation link for communities in rural states. Restored passenger rail service through Missoula would boost tourism, accommodate business travelers, and serve our university's student population.

This project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and I appreciate your consideration of this request. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Kind regards,

John Engen
Mayor



Michael Kardoes
City Manager
citymanager@livingstonmontana.org
(406) 823-6000

Chairperson
Dorel Hoglund
Vice Chairperson
Quentin Schwarz
Commissioners
Mel Friedman
Warren Mabie
Melissa Nootz

July 6, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Livingston, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

We are a community that is heavily reliant on tourism and is keenly interested in all forms of transportation which aid in bringing citizens of our global community to share in our abundant natural beauty. A plan which focuses on the socio-economic drivers and benefits would allow for thoughtful dynamic community planning as a foundation from which to build this regionally transformative project.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and our entire community and I would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Kardoes
City Manager

P.O. Box 339
104 S. Sansome Street
Philipsburg, MT 59858
PHONE: 406-859-3821
FAX: 406-859-3821

Town of Philipsburg

Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As Mayor of the Town of Philipsburg, Montana, the county seat of Granite County, I am writing to convey enthusiasm and unequivocal support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life, and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

Our town is situated in a historical mining district here in southwest Montana. Contained within a setting of immense natural beauty and stunning landscape is an economic resource-based history of boom and bust. With great pride and unquenchable determination our community has pulled itself back from the edge of the abyss. Lying exactly halfway between Yellowstone National Park and Glacier National Park, as well as halfway between the major regional metropolises of Seattle, Washington, and Salt Lake City, Utah, we are positioned as a logical layover point for travelers throughout the northern Rockies. We believe this would

PROGRESS IS ALL CITIZENS

WORKING TOGETHER



July 2, 2021

Page 2

allow us to play a pivotal role in this transportation undertaking.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and we would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel Reddish". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mayor Daniel Reddish

Mayor
Diana Solle
Chief Administrative Officer
Jordan Green
City Attorney
Peter Elverum
City Clerk
Cyndi Thompson
Compliance Officer
Tom Malcomb
Public Works Superintendent
Trent Freeman
Treasurer
Judi Whitney
Utility Billing Clerk
Gena Micu



Montana's Undiscovered Treasure

300 MAIN STREET
DEER LODGE MT 59722-1057
406.846.2238

City Council
Dick Bauman
Amanda Bohrer
Mary Hathaway
John Henderson
Robert Kersch
John J. Molendyke
Anthony Savalla
John Skibsrud

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As Mayor of the City of Deer Lodge, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

Reintroduction of this railroad would increase the public transportation in Powell County and for Deer Lodge. With our senior population, available local travel would be a plus; at present, there is no public transportation in place. The railroad would also enhance the tourism for Deer Lodge, which was the heart of early railroads in Montana. With a National Park Site and the Montana Territorial Prison, and Deer Lodge being one of the oldest towns in Montana territory and state, the nation needs to see the beginnings of Montana.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and I would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

Diana J Solle, Mayor

300 South Merrill
Glendive, Montana 59330



Phone (406) 377-3318
FAX 406-377-6873

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As Mayor of the City of Glendive Montana, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

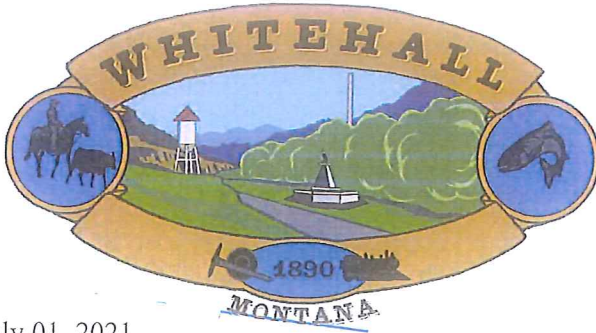
Restoring Rail Service to the Southern portion of Montana would not only benefit the Cities and Towns along the route, but also increase the travel options of Americans in all 50 States. Your support of this Grant would do wonders in taking vehicles off the road and using Americas mass transportation system as a means of travel in the United States.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and I would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jerry Jimison".

Jerry Jimison,
Mayor, City of Glendive Montana



July 01, 2021

Town of Whitehall Montana
Office of the Town Clerk
County of Jefferson, State of Montana
P.O. Box 529/207 E. Legion
Whitehall, MT 59759
Phone: 406-287-3972
Fax: 406-287-5088
clerk@townofwhitehall.org
"This institution is an equal
opportunity provider"

Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As Mayor of the Town of Whitehall, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

The Town of Whitehall supports this effort because it would bring more tourism to our community and that rail travel is good for the environment.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and I would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

Mary Janacaro- Hensleigh



July 8, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As President and CEO of the nonprofit Rail Passengers Association, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

As I've said in my previous congressional testimony, it's not a question of "if trains make money," it's about who trains make money for. We know that passenger rail generates value by acting as an economic engine in the communities served — through jobs, retail, mobility, tourism and real-estate development. The "profit" is earned not by the operator, in this case Amtrak, but in the form of economic growth and prosperity to the communities along the route and generally many multiples of what is spent to provide the service. The BSPRA's study is aimed in part at quantifying those benefits in a meaningful way, demonstrating the value of passenger rail, publicly funded transportation networks and the Biden Administration's commitment to fair access to mobility and opportunity throughout the United States but especially in the long overlooked parts of the country that have been left behind.

This project fits squarely within the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and we would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jim Mathews
President & CEO
Rail Passengers Association/NARP

1967



1990



2011



2017



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION



July 6, 2021

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

As the Director of the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) at Montana State University, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable, and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

As a leader in rural transportation research, and a current Tier I University Transportation Center, WTI recognizes the importance of conducting studies to determine if data shows the need for the implementation of various projects. We believe that this planning effort will clearly show a positive benefit/cost ratio, which will highlight the fact that the reintroduction of rail service to southern Montana will be a benefit to not only our state, but to the nation as a whole.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and we would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

David Kack, Director

**Rural
Transportation
Research
Matters**

Ph: (406) 994-6114

Fax: (406) 994-1697

wtioffice@montana.edu

westerntransportationinstitute.org

P.O. Box 174250
Bozeman,
MT 59717-4250



P.O. Box 173 • 300 College Drive • Glendive, MT 59330 • 406-377-7792

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)
Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As executive director of the Dawson County Economic Development Council, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

The people here in Glendive/Dawson County overwhelmingly support restoration of passenger rail service through southern Montana. We are confident the restoration of that service will create new economic opportunities for our existing Main Street businesses as well as aspiring entrepreneurs, as evidenced by the fact that the existing Empire Builder service generates over \$595 million in annual economic activity for the communities it services, with \$101 million of that

generated in Montana's Hi-Line communities. We are also keen to see our residents be presented with greater equity in transportation options, as at present the only way for locals to travel to most places within our own state, including our state capital, is to drive hundreds of miles through often inclement weather.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and we would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jason M. Stuart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jason Stuart
Executive Director

**Prairie County
Economic Development
Council**

Lance Kalfell
Chairman
42 Montana Road
Terry, MT 59349
(406) 635-5312

Sharla Sackman
Secretary/Treasurer
P.O. Box 7
Terry, MT 59349
(406) 635-2121

*A coordinated Prairie
County effort which
improves the quality of
life and produces a
sustainable population
through a viable and
diversified economy.*

August 31, 2020

David Strohmaier
Board of County Commissioners
200 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

Re: Support for Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority

Dear Mr Strohmaier:

The Prairie County Economic Development Council (PCEDC) supports the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority. Establishment of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority will provide multiple opportunities for community and economic development in our area.

Reinstatement of passenger rail service to the area proposed by the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority will provide an option for public transportation as well as jobs in our region. This provides an opportunity for service industry businesses in our community like restaurants, motels, and convenience stores to conduct business.

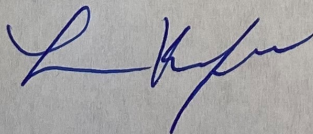
Passenger rail service provides a public transportation option for those that have a fear of flying. As rail service use by the coal and oil industry declines, passenger service also provides an opportunity to make use of rail infrastructure that is already in place.

A direct impact of passenger rail service in our community is access for people in rural areas like ours to obtain services only available in urban areas. These include important services like medical care and mental health services. This is especially important for veterans, the elderly, and those who are unable to drive themselves.

The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority also has the opportunity to consider a myriad of services above and beyond passenger rail service. Package and mail service could serve our rural communities with the delivery of business equipment, parts, and supplies. It may also provide the ability to get supplies that can't be put on a plane.

The PCEDC recognizes the positive potential for our county and our region provided by the establishment of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority.

Sincerely,



Lance Kalfell
Chairman, Prairie County Economic Development Council



PARK COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL
— COUNCIL —

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As Deputy Director of PCEC, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rails services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

The Park County Environmental Council (PCEC) is a place-based conservation organization, working at a local level to protect the environment and wild landscapes of Park County, Montana just north of Yellowstone National Park. PCEC has cultivated a powerful bench of over 3,000 citizens and small businesses committed to conservation, and are building a local movement that shares a vision to preserve wild, open landscapes and resilient rural communities.

PCEC supports local initiatives that foster community resiliency, reduce human impacts to our environment and that connect Park County residents to the natural environment. For example, PCEC chairs a local initiative, the Active Transportation Coalition (ATC), with a mission “*to promote healthy, active, safe and connected communities to all residents and guests by engaging in thoughtful design in*



PARK COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL
— COUNCIL —

consideration of all modes of transportation.” Through the ATC, we are working to connect community members to essential services, to the outdoors and to one another in ways that don’t depend on personal vehicles. The reintroduction of the rail service would reduce increasing tourism traffic, introduce safer commuting options for residents and bolster our local economy in ways we have not seen since before the passenger railroad departed our town.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth in our strategic direction and the goals by the U.S. Department of Transportation and we would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Thank you for your time and consideration, please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely

Program Director

Park County Environmental Council



July 9, 2021

Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As President of the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM), I am writing to express my support for Park County and the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority's (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. Park County and BSPRA seek to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

ASUM is the elected student government for the University of Montana. As ASUM's President, I support Park County and BSPRA's planning study to lay the groundwork for restoration of passenger rail through southern Montana. In Montana, some students have to travel hundreds of miles to access higher education, often in inclement weather. States like Montana need more equitable, sustainable transportation options. Expanding passenger rail throughout the United States is essential for accessing opportunity in rural America.

This project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation and I appreciate your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noah Durnell", written over a light grey mountain range graphic that spans the width of the page.

Noah Durnell
President, Associated Students of the University of Montana

Associated Students of the University of Montana

University Center, Suite 104, Missoula, Montana 59812
phone: 406.243.2451 | email: asum.student@mso.umt.edu | web: umt.edu/asum

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Secretary of the US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As CEO of Bridger Aerospace Group Holdings, LLC and its subsidiaries, I am writing to convey support for the Park County/Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) RAISE Grant Program Planning proposal. The proposed socio-economic planning study seeks to produce a socio-economic plan focusing on reintroducing passenger rail services in a very heavily traversed corridor in the southern region of Montana, following the same route used during an eight-year time period when passenger rail services were offered between 1971 and 1979. The project will combine multiple county resources and staffing and advances the five primary selection criteria directed by the USDOT with particular emphasis on safety, quality of life and economic competitiveness. The development of the plan also fulfills secondary criteria encompassing a broad and resourceful partnership, currently involving 13 Montana counties, with additional counties expressing interest in joining the Authority.

The Park County/BSPRA proposal requests funding assistance for a socio-economic study highlighting feasibility, route descriptions, existing railroad operations, stations, projected schedules, ridership and financial analyses, capital costs and implementation requirements, stakeholder outreach and public benefits of expanded passenger rail service to rural areas or towns in many southern and central counties of Montana. The ultimate goal is a transformational project for Montana, establishing safe, reliable and affordable inter-city, long-distance passenger rail service through southern Montana.

Bridger Aerospace, primarily located at the Bozeman airport, employs over 100 personnel living in southern Montana. Due to the current cost of living in the Bozeman area, many have chosen to purchase homes in neighboring locales and commute to the primary location. Many of these commutes include hazardous mountain passes, wildlife frequented roadways, and ever-changing road conditions. The reintroduction of the rail service would provide these employees with an alternative mode of transportation. It would also provide a cost-effective way for employees and their families to experience southern Montana attractions in their free time.

It is evident that this project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Bridger Aerospace family would appreciate your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Sheehy".

Timothy P. Sheehy, CEO of Bridger Aerospace Group Holdings, LLC and its subsidiaries

