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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: USDOT RAISE Planning Grant Program Matching Commitment

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Park County is pleased to submit a FY2021 USDOT RAISE Grant Program application. The project planning project is estimated to cost as much as \$149,000; the requested RAISE grant amount is \$119,200. As per USDOT requirements, Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) is committed to providing the required 20% match (estimated at up to \$29,800) associated with the overall project budget.

The proposed 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 by Amtrak for the North Coast Hiawatha until 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 thirteen 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, and to points east and west beyond.

The complete application package contains all materials required for your division to review. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding this proposal.

BSPRA Chairman
Missoula County Commissioner



David Strohmaier