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State Representative Matt Caldwell,
Chairman Lee County Legislative Delegation
15191 Homestead Road Building A
Lehigh Acres, Florida, 33971

Subject: October 18, 2017 Meeting

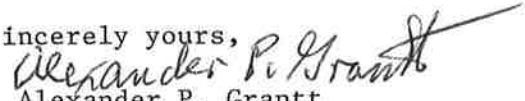
Dear Lee County Legislative Delegation,

Florida is the third most populated state in the nation, with the population of DeSoto, Charlotte, Lee, and Collier Counties not having any scheduled passenger rail service for a population of at least over 1.25 million people. We have a rail line built to near Amtrak passenger rail standards hauling large propane freight tank cars from Lakeland's Winston Yard (CSX Railroad) to as far as Alico Road in south Lee County. This railroad track extends some 12 miles to the Lee/Collier County line just south of the City of Bonita Springs. This railroad track would have to be upgraded to 60 mile per hour track speed for the cost of about \$550,000 per mile in crossties, 115 per yard rails, and ballast upgrades in order to bring passenger trains into north Collier County.

Currently the State of Florida Department of Transportation is in negotiation with CSX the owner of the 100 foot plus wide right-of-way on which the railroad track sits. The population of this area is always vulnerable to hurricanes as witnessed on September 10, 2017, our most recent hurricane Irma's visit to southwest Florida. Let us not forget that during hurricane Kathryn over 1,000 people were evacuated by Amtrak passenger train from New Orleans. Is it not time to have the civic responsibility of providing a life safety alternative method of evacuation possibility which could also be used for post recovery events by use of this railroad track?

Can we not invest let us say between twenty to twenty-five million dollars on a public/private partnership to bring passenger rail service back to southwest Florida which had passenger rail service until Seaboard Coast Line last passenger train on April 30, 1971. Not only is passenger train service necessary as an evacuation route but also for another form of transportation besides automobiles, airplanes, and boats. Where is the responsibility and duty of our state elected officials to bring this about?

Sincerely yours,


Alexander P. Grantt

(former member of City of
Bonita Springs Local Planning
Agency 2000-2004 and former
City of Bonita Springs Councilmember
2004-2008)