



May 14, 2021

Re: North Atlantic Rail Initiative

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Association for a Better Long Island (“ABLI”), a leading regional economic development organization whose collective membership is Long Island's largest taxpayer, in support for the North Atlantic Rail Initiative (“NARI”). The economic, social and environmental benefits of this proposal not only hold the promise of short-term recovery as we emerge from the impacts of the pandemic, but also portend long-term benefits grounded in climate action, environmental justice and economic transformation.

The pursuit of high-speed rail represents an opportunity to realize a transformation of transportation infrastructure matched only a few times in our nation’s history. NARI holds the key to addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting land-efficient transit-oriented development, creating high quality infrastructure jobs as we recover from the COVID-induced recession, and revitalizing numerous historic towns and cities via passenger rail links designed to connect, in a globally competitive way, the region’s institutional assets and major urban areas like Boston and New York.

The proposed NAR high speed and high-performance rail network will transform the economy of Long Island and Suffolk County. This network will connect Long Island with Boston and a score of mid-sized New England cities, creating a unified travel and economic market encompassing the entire 7-state region. At the core of this network is a proposed high-speed rail spine between New York City and Boston that will run east on Long Island from Penn Station to Ronkonkoma, leveraging existing rail corridors and minimizing impacts on surrounding communities. In addition to non-stop services, high speed commuter services will serve new stations at Stony Brook, the Ronkonkoma Hub, the Route 110 Corridor and JFK-Jamaica, linking them all to the global cities of Boston and New York, along with all of New England’s mid-sized cities. Provision of these new service options will not only transform the occupational landscape for employers and employees, creating new markets and a new competitive edge to the region, but also provide residents expanded access to numerous educational and recreational benefits now within reach. In short, NAR will create the world’s largest innovation corridor, with Long Island right at its heart.

NAR is exactly the type of regional transportation and development strategy that Suffolk County has pursued in its Connect Long Island plan to link historic downtowns, world-class research and academic institutions and open space with high-performance mass transit such as enhanced Long Island Rail Road service, Bus Rapid Transit, and now, high-speed rail. These types of investments are exactly what the Northeast region requires to remain competitive, create new job opportunities, attract the emerging workforce, and break the cycle of reliance on single-occupancy automobiles which have had a devastating impact on our historic downtowns and environment. I urge you to support funding for this high-speed rail initiative and usher in a new era of transportation for our region.

Sincerely,

Kyle Strober, Executive Director
Association for a Better Long Island