



June 8, 2016

Mr. Joe McHugh, Vice President
Government Affairs & Corporate Communications
National Railroad Passenger Corporation
60 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. McHugh:

I am writing to you in support of the Suwannee County Economic Development Office and the Suwannee County Board of County Commissioners desire to restore passenger rail service from New Orleans, La., to Jacksonville, Fl., and to add Live Oak, Fl., as a destination point. Live Oak, Fl., was once a railway hub, establishing a connection to our heritage will support our community efforts to revitalize our destination heritage.

In a 2011 Economic Study conducted by Florida State University, hundreds of jobs and millions in value added to the local economy as a result of the Spirit of the Suwannee. Using a very conservative figure the students concluded that the Park generates 250 jobs and almost \$2.9 million in disposable income for the county and 540 jobs and \$11.5 million for the state. The inclusion of rail service in Live Oak, Fl will establish opportunities to build travel packages with Live Oak as a destination. Subsequent to the 2011 FSU Economic Study the Park added a major event. Suwannee Hulaween generated an additional \$10 million in economic impact to the County in 2015.

The Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park hosts more than 600,000 guests annually. We have people that travel from all over the world. With the ability to package travel opportunities with railway service, we have the potential to grow visitor numbers in Live Oak, Fl. We encourage NRPC to give sound consideration to establishing a destination point in Live Oak, Fl. Doing so will help to meet many of the economic development goals this community is working to achieve.

Our marketing director, Teena Peavey posted a poll of our customers on social media seeking to determine the interest in using rail service. The overwhelming response was and enthusiastic "yes!" We believe that our client base would welcome opportunities to travel by rail. We encourage your support to establish rail service in Live Oak, Fl.

Should you have any comments or questions, or need any additional data from me, please do not hesitate to call me at 386/364-1683. We would welcome an opportunity to host you at our facility to further explore this further. Thanking you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James C. Cornett, President & CEO
Cornett's Spirit of the Suwannee