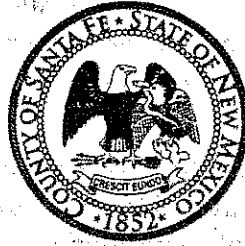


Henry P. Roybal
Commissioner, District 1

Anna Hansen
Commissioner, District 2

Robert A. Anaya
Commissioner, District 3



Anna T. Hamilton
Commissioner, District 4

Ed Moreno
Commissioner, District 5

Katherine Miller
County Manager

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 26, 2017

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Chris Hyer, Economic Development Manager

Via: Penny Ellis-Green, Growth Management Director
Katherine Miller, County Manager

Item: **Request Approval to be a Participating Party in a Federal TIGER IX Discretionary Grant Application and Provide \$12,500 In Matching Funds for the Amtrak Southwest Chief Improvements Project. (Growth Management/Chris Hyer)**

SUMMARY:

Government jurisdictions along the route of the railroad tracks that allow the Southwest Chief to make its daily run from Chicago to Los Angeles, have asked Santa Fe County to be a party of combining of funds to make a match for a Federal government grant. This grant is for purchase of materials for maintenance to keep the tracks viable. The requested pledge amount is \$12,500.

BACKGROUND:

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) currently owns the rail track in Northeast NM that runs from Lamy north into Colorado. BNSF does not currently run freight on this track, and leases it to Amtrak for passenger rail service. Amtrak currently provides passenger rail service along this route via the "Southwest Chief," which runs from Chicago to Los Angeles. The route contains stops in Raton, Las Vegas, Lamy, Albuquerque, and Gallup. Of the 359,467 annual riders (2016) on the Southwest Chief, 30% of them boarded or detrained at one of 4 stops in NM from Raton to Albuquerque.

There are maintenance and upgrade costs to maintaining the track, and BNSF has asked Amtrak to pick up the costs. BNSF has stated that if Amtrak is unable to pay for the upgrades and maintenance, BNSF will cancel the lease for Amtrak to use the tracks and BNSF will likely let the tracks fall into disrepair. Amtrak will then be forced to change the Southwest Chief's route and use BNSF's busy southern transcontinental tracks, which go through Oklahoma and Texas and cross New Mexico south of I-40.

Amtrak and the New Mexico Department of Transportation have been working on a Tiger IX grant from the Federal government and need to have matching money in order to qualify for funding. Each jurisdiction along the route of the railroad tracks is asked to provide \$12,500 that will be aggregated for this purpose.

Therefore, Santa Fe County is being asked by Colfax County – the assembler of the matching monies for the grant – to make \$12,500 available for contribution to the matching money if the grant application is successful. The grant application is due by October 16, 2017 and Colfax County would like to indicate all participating entities on the final application.

Conclusion

This is an important economic development issue to SF County, as the County collects taxes (primarily property, sales tax) from BNSF and Amtrak, and benefits from the tourism dollars that flow into the economy. The \$12,500 investment will help continue these benefits.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Letter from the Colfax County Chair of the Colfax County Board of Commissioners

Exhibit B – Letter from Santa Fe County Commission to the USDOT Pledging a \$12,500 contribution



Colfax County
Board of Commissioners

P.O. Box 1498 • Raton, New Mexico 87740

Phone: (575) 445-9661 • Fax: (575) 445-2902

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Member

455 A NM SR 72
Raton, NM 87740
(575) 443-2846

MARY LOU KERN

Colfax County Manager
(575) 445-9661

Rayetta Trujillo

County Clerk
(575) 445-5551

September 13, 2017

RE: Proposal to Support TIGER IX Discretionary Grant Application

Dear Community Leader,

Colfax County is preparing to apply for the Federal National Infrastructure Investments under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (TIGER IX) Discretionary Grants Program. This application will seek funding to support the continuation of improvements to segments of the BNSF Railroad on which Amtrak's Southwest Chief operates in the three-state area of Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico.

Garden City, Kansas was awarded a TIGER VI in 2014 and La Junta, Colorado was successful in receiving a TIGER VII Grant in 2015. These two grants have gone a long way in upgrading the railway to passenger train standards. Additional repairs and upgrades are necessary to complete the work required to keep the Southwest Chief operating.

The TIGER IX application will require coordination between stakeholders in the three states to establish new matching amounts; the more entities that participate, the greater the scope of work that can be accomplished. The goal is to apply for a grant in the amount of \$25 million. Local entities are being asked to consider a match of \$12,500. The local entity would only be obligated to pay if the grant is awarded.

Local County and Municipal support and pledges of matching funds are the reason that the TIGER VI and TIGER VII Grants have been successful. This support has led to matching funds being provided by Amtrak, BNSF and Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico Departments of Transportation. All monies raised in New Mexico along with the appropriate percentage of federal funds would be devoted to work on the New Mexico portion of the line. Your continued support for a TIGER IX Grant would greatly enhance the chances of a successful application.

The final grant application is due by October 16, 2017. All participating parties must be indicated on the final application. Please take this request to your governing bodies so that those that elect to participate can be listed on

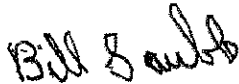


the final application. A letter of support indicating the amount of matching funds would need to be sent to Colfax County prior to the October 16, 2017 deadline to submit the application.

Please send to: Colfax County
P.O. Box 1498
Raton, NM 87740
Attention: TIGER IX GRANT

Thank you for your consideration in supporting this vital project to keep the Southwest Chief running through northern New Mexico.

Respectfully,

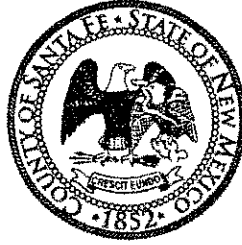
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Sauble". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Sauble, Chairman
Colfax County Commission

Henry P. Roybal
Commissioner, District 1

Anna Hansen
Commissioner, District 2

Robert A. Anaya
Commissioner, District 3



Anna T. Hamilton
Commissioner, District 4

Ed Moreno
Commissioner, District 5

Katherine Miller
County Manager

September 26, 2017

Mr. Kevin Monroe
Director of Government Affairs
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590
(202) 366 8900
kevin.monroe@dot.gov

Re: Letter of Support- Southwest Chief Route TIGER IX Application

Dear Mr. Monroe,

On behalf of Santa Fe County, New Mexico I am pleased to pledge \$12,500 in support of the referenced TIGER IX Application.

Amtrak's Southwest Chief is a key transcontinental passenger train serving major cities and rural communities along its route from Chicago to Los Angeles. Annually over 12,000 passengers board or get off the train in Lamy, New Mexico. The Southwest Chief route, and the Lamy station in particular, provides economic benefit to the County, both in the form of tourism dollars as well as property taxes. The State of New Mexico commissioned a study in 2013 on the economic impact of the Southwest Chief, and the study noted that over 57,000 visitors come to NM on Amtrak in 2012, with a total economic impact of over \$29 million. The study also highlighted important Gross Receipts Taxes and employment as a result of the train.

The track to be repaired will be approximately 20 miles of line between Lamy, NM and an area known as La Bajada, significantly improving the safety and suitability of the route for passenger rail.

We urge the USDOT to fund this request because we strongly believe this project not only meets but directly matches the TIGER primary selection criteria and goals of this grant opportunity by addressing safety and multi-modal transportation issues along an important rural corridor.

Sincerely,

Henry P. Roybal
Chair, Board of County Commissioners

