



Comments on the Environmental Assessment

Date Received: 9/24/2009 Comment ID: 13 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Aleksy, Donald, LaSalle, IL 61301

Organization: City of LaSalle

Comment: The City of LaSalle would fully support Amtrak Rail Service through our city. It would be a benefit for economic development for our downtown.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/22/2009 Comment ID: 17 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Aleksy, Donald, LaSalle, IL 61301

Organization: City of LaSalle

Comment: I am writing in response to the Illinois Department of Transportation's notification that a passenger rail line is being considered between Chicago and Iowa City. We are pleased to hear of these discussions. Specifically that the City of LaSalle is being considered under Alternative "B". This would be a boost to our economic development efforts here in LaSalle. Amtrak Service with a stop in LaSalle would be beneficial for many reasons. The first is that it will support our tourism efforts with the Lock 16 Project of the Illinois Heritage Corridor with our new Canal Boat. In addition, our citizens would have easy access to Chicago not currently available. They now have to travel 20 miles north to Mendota to access this service. We have many veterans who require transportation to the Iowa City Veteran's Hospital. This would be a great benefit to our Veteran's Home in supplying transportation service. Our area is also a tourism hub with proximity to many State Parks and other historical sites in the area. I believe the combination of needs for veteran transportation, tourism attractions and the need of our citizen's to have direct access to Chicago makes the City of LaSalle a strong candidate to host a stop along the Alternative "B" Plan. I look forward to speaking with [you] about this project. If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/5/2009 Comment ID: 68 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Anderson, Brenda, Lombard, IL 60148

Organization:

Comment: My daughter and I live near Chicago, and she is considering enrollment at Iowa State University. We are concerned about the lack of options available for public transportation between Chicago and various cities in Iowa. Passenger rail service between Chicago and Iowa City would be a great start! More students would be encouraged to come to Iowa if rail service were available.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/28/2009 Comment ID: 20 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Anonymous, , ,

Organization:

Comment: There already is a train running from Chicago through Mendota and to Princeton. If it went the southern route it give access to Joliet, Morris and LaSalle. Both connect at Wyanet.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/22/2009 Comment ID: 106 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Armstrong, Ed, Plainfield, IL 60585

Organization:

Comment: Just a note that I grew up in Dixon IL in the 50's and 60's and the Chicago and Northwestern (where my father worked), ran a daily passenger train from Iowa to Chicago. It stopped in Dixon around 7 AM and ended in Chicago around 9 AM. Return trip I believe left Chicago around 5 PM. Always thought it was a good idea so returning to something like this is appealing. At that time it was helpful for college travels.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 9 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Bachman, Jason, Lake Zurich, IL

Organization:

Comment: How much traffic today runs between the cities on the line? What data do we have about this?

Topic(s): Transportation

FONSI Response: Pages 3-4 and 3-5 of the environmental assessment provide information on current train traffic on the rail lines proposed to be used for the passenger rail service.

Date Received: 10/4/2009 Comment ID: 62 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Bacon, Elizabeth, Darien, IL 60561

Organization: Experlex, LLC

Comment: Great idea!!!

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/4/2009 Comment ID: 63 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Bacon, Robert, Darien, IL 60561

Organization:

Comment: This proposed service would be a great addition to rail options in the midwest. It makes sense environmentally, logistically and, very likely, financially. To Connect Chicago with efficient passenger rail service into the central midwest (and beyond) would be a part of the rebirth of a vital and affordable transportation option that will serve tens of thousands of people for years to come. Let's get on with it!

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/15/2009 Comment ID: 105 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Beal, Leesa, Chicago, IL 60606-7206

Organization: US Army Corps of Engineers

Comment: This office is in receipt of your August 19, 2009 correspondence requesting the participation of the Chicago District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) as a cooperating agency in the review of the Tier 1 Service Level Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service project. The Illinois Department of Transportation and Iowa Department of transportation, in conjunction with the Federal Railroad Administration, are initiating the information gathering phase of the EA for the proposed improvements included in the Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service Project. The Corps cordially accepts the invitation to participate in the collaborative effort among Federal Government, States, railroads and other key stakeholders in facilitating the vision of a national network of high-speed rail corridors. According to the EA, Tier 1 will establish purpose and need, estimate ridership, select the preferred route, identify the station stops, specify the service levels, define types of operation, and identify the logical next phases. Tier 2 will define specific construction activities which would be evaluated in subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents. The Corps will be required to evaluate the EA in accordance with the policy and procedures set forth in the rules governing the regulatory program of the Corps of Engineers, Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 320 through part 332, and the policies and procedures for implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 230. The goal of our review is to conclude that the activity will not have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the human environment. As part of the Corps requirements, The Tier 2 EA shall address all studies and surveys as required by Federal and state governing authorities and shall follow all policies and procedures in identifying aquatic resources and natural areas within the project corridor. The EA shall also provide an assessment of the direct, indirect and cumulative effects that the project may have on federally jurisdictional areas such as rivers, streams, wetlands, etc., and if necessary, consider compensation to offset the proposed impacts. Please be informed that additional environmental studies and reviews may be required by this office once the NEPA/404 Review process is underway and the two proposed alternative site configurations are presented for comment. These comments address activities within the Chicago District regulated area only which, terminates at the Kane-Kendall County border for Alternative A and at the Will-Kendall County border for Alternative B. The Corps looks forward to working closely with Federal and other lead agencies in completing a comprehensive review of the supporting documentation pertaining to the project. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Chernich of my staff by telephone at (312) 846-5531, or email at Kathy.g.chernich@usace.army.mil.

Topic(s): General Comment

FONSI Response: Comments noted. Coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue in the Tier 2 Project Level NEPA review. Any required permits will be applied for in the Tier 2 Project Level NEPA review process.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 26 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Beat, Robert, Bettendorf, IA 52722

Organization:

Comment: I think the choice of any route will result in positive benefits for rail travel. It would be nice if it could ultimately interface with national AMTRAK routes without having to go to Chicago. I think consideration should be given to encouraging bus companies to offer connecting service between medium-sized communities and selected AMTRAK rail stations to extend the reach of rail travel throughout the region

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted. As discussed on page 2-1 in the EA, bus service would be provided as part of the ultimate service level.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 29 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Belz, Nat, Asheville, NC 28803

Organization:

Comment: Go for it! I'll use it whenever I come home!

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 52 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Biermann, John, East Moline, IL 61244

Organization:

Comment: I fully support Amtrak's' proposed route through the Quad Cities. My wife and I have traveled Amtrak about 10,000 miles over the past 7 years (to Washington DC, Los Angeles, CA; Whitefish, MT). We normally board in Galesburg, IL, to connect in Chicago. The connection in the Quad Cities would be far more convenient for us. We have trips planned in 2010 to Montana and San Francisco, CA, both by rail. In addition to long-distance connections, the commuter traffic and usage would greatly benefit from a Quad Cities connection alleviating the problems of battling Chicago traffic/parking and saving fuel.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/30/2009 Comment ID: 35 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Bloom, Andrea, Earlville, IL 60518

Organization: The Earlville Post

Comment: Thank you for this information. As the proposed northern route passes through the two communities covered by our newspaper, Earlville and Leland, Ill.(between Plano and Mendota), we are wondering: Would the passenger trains stop here, to give people the benefit of convenient transportation to Chicago and elsewhere? Or would they just increase the already frequent and painfully loud rail traffic passing through our business and residential neighborhoods night and day?

Topic(s): Noise

FONSI Response: Existing stations at Plano and Mendota would continue to provide passenger rail service; a station is not planned for Earlville. As discussed in the EA (pages 3-32, 3-33, and sheets 18, 19, and 20 for the Route A Alternative in Appendix C), noise levels would minimally increase in Leland and Earlville.

Date Received: 10/9/2009 Comment ID: 84 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Borgstrom, Robert, Morris, IL 60450

Organization:

Comment: The CSXT Rail line moves freight now through many towns one being Morris. The rail traffic has increased over the years and will continue to do so with the new Seneca intermodal being developed. We can not control the time of the rail traffic so at two in the morning when the conductors love to sound the horn we are at their mercy. With so many houses on the rail line I think it would be a tremendous mistake to open the freight rail line for passengers.If this project goes through, how many more our down the line? I can't state this opinion strong enough. Please keep me updated on the progress of this project. Thank you for this opportunity to voice the oppinion of many Morris residents.

Topic(s): Opposition to B

FONSI Response: As discussed in the EA (pages 3-34, 3-35, and sheets 17 and 18 for the Route B Alternative in Appendix C), noise levels would minimally increase in Morris.

Date Received: 10/9/2009 Comment ID: 85 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Borgstrom, Chris, Morris, IL 60450

Organization:

Comment: I am an individual living in Morris, Illinois, which is located along this proposed corridor. I understand that you are studying the human, natural, and economic impacts of expanding the use of rail along this corridor. I oppose any expansion of rail use. Our human environment already has too much pollution--from the exhaust of these engines and noise--the disruption of peaceful neighborhoods, and the possible disruption of the natural environments along the way. The small chance of having a positive economic impact would be overshadowed by the greater cost to the human and natural environments.

Topic(s): Opposition to B

FONSI Response: As discussed on pages 3-50 and 3-51 in the EA, emissions of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides would minimally increase. Emissions of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons would decrease when considering train emissions and reductions in emissions from vehicles and planes. As discussed in the EA (pages 3-34, 3-35, and sheets 17 and 18 for the Route B Alternative in Appendix C), noise levels would minimally increase in Morris. Pages 3-15 through 3-17 of the EA discuss the economic impacts of the proposed passenger rail service.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 51 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Breisch, David, Moline, IL 61265

Organization:

Comment: I am a strong supporter of increased passenger rail service in the country, as well as between Chicago and the Quad Cities/Iowa City. As a resident of the Quad Cities, I currently drive to the Chicagoland area about once a month. I look forward to the day that I can take the train instead of drive. Also, it would be a great asset to our region and would provide fantastic economic and environmental benefits.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/14/2009 Comment ID: 94 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Breitwieser, Susan, Morris, IL 60450

Organization:

Comment: Please do not allow this project to go any further...My back yard backs up to freight railway tracks. The freight traffic has increased so much. It used to be that only a couple trains late at night went thru. Now there are many. These conductors do not care either that they are waking everyone in the neighborhood up. The old conductors used to give quick blows of their whistles before the intersection, now they begin before the intersection and lay on the horn thru the next intersection. I can not tell you the last night that I was able to get the required eight hours of sleep. I work day shift, and every day I am so tired. Now I see that there are folks wanting to have commuter trains use those tracks from Chicago to Iowa City. I personally do not want this to happen. There are MANY children in my neighborhood. I would hate to see anyone get hurt by those fast passenger trains. Not to mention the noise. As I mentioned earlier, the train traffic has already increased a lot. It is very loud as it is. I have planted many evergreen trees both at the edge of my property near the tracks as well as near the back of my house trying to diffuse some of the noise. Believe me it does not work! I am asking that everyone who is involved in this project please, please think of the little people. I am still fortunate enough to have a job, so I am able to pay for my mortgage. I can not afford to move. Even if I could, I am sure that with increased train traffic the value of my property will go down drastically! I do not see this helping our economy in any way what so ever. Please, please share my concerns with everyone involved. I hope to get a reply to my message.

Topic(s): Opposition to B

FONSI Response: As discussed in the EA (pages 3-34, 3-35, and sheets 17 and 18 for the Route B Alternative in Appendix C), noise levels would minimally increase in Morris. Pages 3-26 and 3-27 of the EA discuss public safety; grade crossing warnings would be upgraded and highway congestion would decrease, improving safety.

Date Received: 10/15/2009 Comment ID: 100 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Buczek, Mary, Davenport, IA 52804

Organization: Iowa Association of Railroad Passengers

Comment: After viewing the environmental study and previously the Amtrak study, I want to express my support of passenger rail service between Chicago and Iowa City. I support the route using the BNSF to Wyanete, Illinois then connecting to the Iowa Interstate to the Quad Cities and Iowa City. Environmentally the train will help conserve oil usage by using less fuel than automobiles driving between the cities. I have discussed passenger train service with several people. Almost all are supportive of having passenger train service and would use it as an alternative mode of transportation.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/6/2009 Comment ID: 71 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Cechner, Thomas, Lockport, IL 60441

Organization:

Comment: The southern route along the Illinois river is better. The route is more scenic and under served. This will bring more people into the system. There are state parks along the way and major towns Minooka, Morris, Marseilles, Ottawa, La Salle and Peru.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/1/2009 Comment ID: 58 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Collette, Rondi, Minooka, IL 60447

Organization:

Comment: Since we live close to the Plan B route, we would prefer that alternative. That way we could actually use what our tax dollars are paying for, for a change.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/9/2009 Comment ID: 89 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Costigan, Michael, Channahon, IL 60410

Organization:

Comment: I believe this to be a sound proposal that offers several benefits for the residents of the region. We sorely need transportation alternatives to flying and the use of highways. Building more highways and airports/runways is no longer the most viable or economically feasible solution. We need diversification in our transportation choices, and choices that are economical and practical. This proposed rail service would help to ease severely crowded highways and offer a viable alternative to flying. Both of the proposed routes of "A" and "B" from Iowa City to Chicago have their advantages. Please do one. I travel to both the Quad Cities and Iowa City with some frequency. Rail service would be far more attractive than driving I-80. It would offer a safe and relaxing mode of transportation. One could even work and study while traveling.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/8/2009 Comment ID: 83 Closed Comment Source: Info Line

Name: Curry, Marie, Lockport, IL 60441

Organization:

Comment: We're in desperate need of some transportation into Iowa. I have to go into Iowa...there's no form...other than I have to go into Chicago and I still can't get into the cities I want in Iowa. So I'm certainly looking forward to having some transportation into Iowa City.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 49 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Dalton, Larry, Davenport, IA 52804

Organization:

Comment: Would like to see the northern route. It would be an economic boost to the Quad Cities. It would be better for the environment. With the colleges we have from Iowa City to Chicago, would be a real need for train transportation. It would be good for a commuter train. It would benefit both Iowa and Illinois.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/28/2009 Comment ID: 21 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Dessner, Pat, Columbus Junction, IA 52738

Organization: Workplace Solutions

Comment: This would be a great service.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/13/2009 Comment ID: 92 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Diehl, Tracy, Annawan, IL 61234

Organization: Village of Annawan

Comment: I am writing in support of the State of Iowa and State of Illinois ARRA application for passenger rail service between Chicago, Quad Cities and Iowa City. While the train would not be stopping in Annawan specifically, we do feel the train stopping in the area would make a positive impact all surrounding communities here in Henry County. It would potentially bring more people to the area who would in turn shop at our stores and stay at our hotels. The other plus for the train to stop in the area is, while we can get on the train in Princeton or Kewanee, it would give those closer to Geneseo a near by location to use this transportation. Lastly as we all have celebrations in our community and this would give those traveling to said events a different outlet for transportation. Again, this will then help with commerce in our locations. Not to mention adding to attendance to our community festivals. If I can be or any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me here in Annawan. Best of luck with your decision! Thank you for your time and consideration.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 6 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Dumelle, Christopher, Oak Park, IL 60302

Organization:

Comment: I believe the Northern Route would run more closely through the center of the Chicago area's population, allowing it to serve more riders more easily than the Southern Route.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 54 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Eberhardt, Patrick, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization: City of Geneseo

Comment: I am writing this letter to express support for an application being submitted by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) under competitive grant funding made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Illinois DOT is collaborating with the Iowa DOT to seek High Speed Rail corridors and Intercity Passenger Rail Service (HSIPR) funding through a Track 2 application. These funds would support continued environmental impact analysis, track infrastructure construction and improvements, layover facility construction and station improvements to implement service between Chicago and Iowa City, Iowa. Approval of this application would allow Illinois to move forward with its mission of providing fast, frequent and reliable train service to as many Illinois communities as possible. The implementation of this project would help create jobs, improve our nation's transportation infrastructure and assist in providing transportation alternatives to the citizens of northwestern Illinois. The City of Geneseo City Council recently passed a resolution in support of a passenger rail route from Chicago to the Quad Cities. The City owns property adjacent to the Iowa Interstate Railroad tracks in the downtown corridor, which is suitable for development as a future station site. This property is adjacent to the 1900-era depot building, and could also be utilized as parking if the former depot building were deemed appropriate for restoration as a modern station facility. The community is supportive of having a passenger rail station, and the City's 1997 comprehensive Plan (updated 2005) includes development of the aforementioned site as a passenger rail station. This project is strongly supported by those in our community and so we respectfully encourage you to take full consideration of this application.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted. As noted on page 2-5 in the EA, the location of the proposed Geneseo station will be determined and documented in a Tier 2 project-level NEPA document.

Name: Engle, Janice, Barrington, IL 60010

Organization: Fish and Wildlife Service

Comment: This responds to your request for comments on the Tier 1 Service Level Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service project. Illinois Department of Transportation and Iowa Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Federal Railroad Administration are evaluating the reestablishment of passenger rail service between the aforementioned cities. The Tier 1 Service Level EA addresses the service level issues that would be part of the initial operations and the proposed alternatives. The Tier 2 Project Level analyses would address specific project level activities. We provide comments as they relate to fish and wildlife resources that may be affected by construction and operation of the proposed project. We reviewed the information provided in your Tier 1 Service Level EA. We checked our records for the presence of federally listed species, Service trust resources, and other fish and wildlife resources that may be affected by the proposed project. Based on our review we offer the following comments that should be addressed in the Tier 2 Project Level EA.

Alternatives

The Tier 1 EA indicates that for both alternatives (Route A and B), track rehabilitation would occur within the existing railroad grade. However, some ditching, minor bridge work and culvert work, and other track related upgrades would be required outside of the existing railroad grade. The Tier 2 EA should identify the locations of these track upgrades and assess possible impacts to natural resources. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Noise and Vibration

The Tier 2 EA should evaluate whether wildlife, particularly migratory birds, would be affected by noise and vibration from the possible increase in frequency and speed of trains for both alternatives.

Parks and Federally or State-listed Natural Areas

The Tier 2 EA should describe and identify all natural areas providing habitat for wildlife resources that abut the right-of-way of the proposed alternatives. These natural areas would include county forest preserves which provide valuable habitat for fish and wildlife resources. A figure should be provided in the Tier 2 EA that shows all natural areas along the proposed alternatives. Figure 3.11.1 only shows state wildlife management areas and neglects to show county forest preserves or other natural areas.

Threatened and Endangered Species

This section notes that specific construction impacts to listed and candidate species would be further evaluated in the Tier 2 EA. The Tier 2 EA should include a list of the state listed species that are present in aforementioned natural areas as some of those species (i.e., migratory birds) are also Service trust resources.

Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

The Tier 2 EA should fully disclose all indirect and cumulative impacts to natural resources. The Tier 1 EA only discusses anticipated beneficial impacts from the two alternatives. Indirect and cumulative impacts such as those that could occur to streams, wetlands, water quality, etc. as a result of proposed track upgrades should be identified as well. These comments only address activities within the Chicago Illinois Field Office coverage area, which ends at the Kane-Kendall County border for Alternative A and at the Will-Kendall County border for Alternative B. The Service's Rock Island Field Office should be contacted for comments outside of our coverage area. This letter provides comment under the authority of, and in accordance with, the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (83 Stat. 852 as amended P.L. 91-190,42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (87 Stat. 884. as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Shawn Cirton at 847/381-2253, ext. 19.

Topic(s): Natural Resources

FONSI Response: Comments noted. Your letter will be referenced during completion of the Tier 2 analysis to address your concerns with any construction outside the existing railroad grades, noise and vibration impacts to wildlife, habitat, protected species, and cumulative impacts. The Rock Island Field Office has been contacted.

Name: Eschbach, Robert, ,

Organization: City of Ottawa

Comment: As members of the Illinois Valley Corridor Steering Committee, we are in favor of the Route B Alternative as described in the Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service Tier 1 Service Level Environment Assessment. We are not aware at this time if those responsible for this aforementioned document has any knowledge of a feasibility study that has already been performed, as well as what is proposed in the near future for a 60 mile section of the Route B Alternative. In August of 2003 an Illinois Valley Commuter Rail Feasibility Study was complete for the 60-mile corridor from Joliet to LaSalle/Peru. This study concluded that the existing CSX rail line is physically, operationally, and financially feasible for commuter rail operations. For more in depth information on this study, please see the following website: www.cityofottawa.org. Since that time this committee had been working to secure funding for the next phase of studies. We are happy to report that the funds have been secured and we are anxiously waiting to start a comprehensive transportation corridor study. The Chicago to Iowa study states that Route A already has passenger rail through almost half of its proposed route. Therefore, Route B would make a better alternative by providing service to areas that are not currently being served by commuter rail. This commuter rail service, thus reducing vehicular traffic on the already congested highways. It would seem to be more financially feasible to examine the existing Phase I Feasibility Study and wait for the results of the planned Phase II study as both of these are either paid for or fully funded. We believe that this has the potential to save a tremendous amount of revenue, while answering the questions regarding the anticipated cost estimates associated with proposed track improvements, grade crossings and new signals. Should you have any questions or comments please contact Tami Huffel, City Planner for the city of Ottawa at (815) 433-0161 ext. 40. (Also signed by Mayor Richard Kopczick, Mayor David Spicer, Mayor Scott Harl, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Davis and Mayor Fred Esmond)

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Thank you for your comment in support of the Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service. We have reviewed the August 2003 Illinois Valley Commuter Rail Feasibility Study. The EA for the Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service considered alternatives for intercity passenger rail. Chapter 2 of the EA discusses the merits of the Route A and B Alternatives and concluded that the Route B Alternative is a longer route, would require more time for trains to travel from Chicago to Iowa City, and would require more upgrade of rail, signals, and other infrastructure. The Route B Alternative would not attract as many riders as the Route A Alternative, and fewer vehicle, bus, and plane trips would be diverted to rail. Emissions from trains would be higher from the Route B Alternative and would not be offset by trip diversions as much as Route A. Environmental impacts (wetlands, streams, and hazardous waste sites) would be greater on Route B. Taking all of these factors into consideration, the Preferred Alternative for the intercity passenger rail is the Route A Alternative. Commuter rail from Joliet to La Salle would serve a different function than the proposed intercity passenger rail service and selection of the Route A Alternative does not preclude the development of a commuter rail system from Joliet to Peru/La Salle.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 28 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Fabian, Karen, Morris, IL 60450

Organization: KET Corporation

Comment: Having a passenger train stop in Morris would definitely improve commerce in our town. Please go with alternative plan B.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/9/2009 Comment ID: 88 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Fries, Richard and Rebecca, Joliet, IL 60435

Organization:

Comment: We understand there used to be a train that went from Chicago to Iowa City, the Rock Island and it would be great to have it back. We think it would be great to have a train from Chicago to Iowa City that goes through Joliet. There are many students from Joliet that attend the University of Iowa and this would be a great way to get home and back. It would also be nice to be able to visit Iowa City from Joliet for football games, basketball games and visiting friends and not have to drive. We are both alumni from the University of Iowa and believe there are many more here in Joliet. It is a great idea and we think it should be done.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/9/2009 Comment ID: 101 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Froman, John, Miami, OK 74355

Organization: Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma

Comment: Thank you for notice of the referenced projects. The Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma is currently unaware of any documentation directly linking Indian Religious Sites to the proposed construction. In the event any items falling under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) are discovered during construction, the Peoria Tribe request notification and further consultation. The Peoria Tribe has no objection to the proposed construction. However, if any human skeletal remains and/or objects falling under NAGPRA are uncovered during construction, the construction should stop immediately, and the appropriate persons, including state and tribal NAGPRA representatives contacted.

Topic(s): Cultural Resources

FONSI Response: Thank you for your comment. Project-level specific analysis will be conducted under Tier 2 NEPA documentation. Coordination with agencies will occur during this process as specific resources, potential impacts, and concerns are identified.

Date Received: 10/11/2009 Comment ID: 90 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Gehrke, Judith, Iowa City, IA 52240

Organization:

Comment: The Delbert Gehrke family of Iowa City, Ia. is ecstatic about the proposal to have train service between Mendota and I.C. We were raised in Mendota and 10 of us now live in I.C. My husband worked for the Iowa Athletic Dept for 35 yrs and I taught school. Our children and grandchildren are here as well as many friends and students at U of Iowa that are from the Mendota area. There are many Hawk fans in the area and student parents that travel from Mendota to I.C. Our hospitals, UIHC and VA service many people in the Mendota area. I travel from I.C. to Mendota to visit my Mother every 10 days. The truck traffic on I80 is stressful and many seniors will find the train service that passes the beautiful countryside/over Miss. river a real vacation trip. We already took a train from Mt. Pleasant to Princeton...just "experience a train ride" but there was no Mendota stop (disappointing). Hurray for the Mendota Iowa City train. Count 10 votes from us.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/14/2009 Comment ID: 103 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Haaker, Anne, Springfield, IL 62701-1512

Organization: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

Comment: We have reviewed the information provided in the Environmental Assessment regarding the above referenced project. Our review is required by section 106 of the National historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. We advice that there may be properties of architectural, historical or archaeological significance that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places within the project Boundaries. This will require consultation with this office to avoid adverse effects as defined in 36 CFR 800. We look forward to receiving and reviewing the information we requested in a letter dated September 1, 2009, and working with you as the project continues. If you have any questions, please contact Emilie Eggemeyer, Cultural Resources Manager, #1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701, 217/785-3977.

Topic(s): Cultural Resources

FONSI Response: Thank you for your comment. Project-level specific analysis will be conducted under Tier 2 NEPA Project-level documentation. Consultation with your office under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with regard to architectural, historical, and archaeological resources will occur during this process as specific resources, potential impacts, and concerns are identified.

Date Received: 10/6/2009 Comment ID: 69 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Hahn, Jerry, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization: Hahn Studio

Comment: SUBJECT: I am writing in support of the State of Iowa and State of Illinois ARRA application for passenger rail service between Chicago, Quad Cities, and Iowa City. I am a retired employee of the US Army Corps of Engineers (Rock Island). During the mid 1960's (while in the military) and beginning in 1969 as a resident and small business owner here in Geneseo, I fully enjoyed and profited by the existence of passenger rail service to points east and west. I utilized passenger rail service coast to coast for business travel, and personal and recreational purposes. As a Human Resources Manager responsible for staffing at the Corps of Engineers District Office, travel arrangements for new employees often included train travel. The gradual loss of this option complicated travel planning and was more costly. Enjoyable and affordable rail access to locations east and west for business travel, educational purposes (college travel for children), and plain old family fun train trips to places like Chicago were not there as a travel option during much of this time. I fully support the idea of reigniting passenger rail service across this part of the Midwest, especially this Chicago through Geneseo to the Quad Cities and Iowa City segment. I cannot help but believe that the economic, job creation, educational, recreational, and overall quality of life impacts will be 100% positive.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/24/2009 Comment ID: 12 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Hannafan, Terrence, Clinton, IA 52732

Organization:

Comment: Good morning, I firmly support expanded passenger rail service in the upper Midwest. Two suggestions for future routes: Chicago-Clinton-Cedar Rapids; Minneapolis-St. Louis. Thank you.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 16 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Hausler, Bob, Plano, IL 60545

Organization: City of Plano

Comment: Hi Amanda, The City of Plano, Illinois supports the Chicago, Illinois and Iowa City, Iowa Alternate Route "A" rail line with stops in Plano, Illinois. Thank You,

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 8 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Hausler, Bob, Plano, IL 60545

Organization: City of Plano

Comment: Rick, The City of Plano, Illinois supports the Chicago, Illinois and Iowa City, Iowa Alternate Route "A" rail line with stops in Plano, Illinois. Thank You, Mayor Robert A Hausler, City of Plano, Illinois

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/1/2009 Comment ID: 59 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Helsell, Charles, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Organization:

Comment: I have heard about this proposed passenger train route (Iowa City to Chicago via Quad Cities) and support such a route added to Amtrak's system. It does seem to me that such a route would benefit from having Cedar Rapids as the terminus rather than Iowa City. In other words, that the route would start in Cedar Rapids and continue to Iowa City, etc. I say this not just because I live in Cedar Rapids and would use that passenger train to visit Chicago (and, possibly, to go on to other Amtrak destinations) but because I see Cedar Rapids as a much larger metropolitan area than Iowa City and including it in a proposed route would add considerably to passenger use of the route and to the financial viability and success of the route. There may be some very good reasons why Cedar Rapids is not or cannot be considered for this route including difficulty linking Cedar Rapids with the Iowa City route or other difficulties. I only provide this (and this may be the wrong organization to suggest this to) because it seems like such an obvious city to include in your plans.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Iowa City was identified as the western terminus of the proposed Chicago to Iowa City Intercity passenger rail service based on the University of Iowa and area hospitals. A substantial number of University students are from Illinois; it is anticipated that many of these students, family, and others would travel by train from Iowa City to various destinations between the Quad Cities and Chicago. Traffic generated by the hospitals, the business community, and area residents would add to the rail service demand.

The proposed Chicago to Iowa City Intercity passenger rail service would use the existing Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) from Wyanet, Illinois to Iowa City to provide service from Chicago to Iowa City via the Quad Cities (the Quad Cities was previously identified as a destination from Chicago within the Midwest Regional Rail System). The IAIS rail line extends from Utica, Illinois through Wyanet, Illinois to the Quad Cities and continues across southern Iowa to Iowa City, Des Moines, and Omaha. Iowa DOT has submitted a Track 3 application to extend passenger rail service across Iowa to Omaha. The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative identified the IAIS rail line as the route for the proposed Chicago to Omaha passenger rail service based on available line capacity (the IAIS line is lightly used for freight traffic, as compared to the heavily used Union Pacific and BNSF Railway lines).

Cedar Rapids, Iowa has been identified as one of the locations for the proposed feeder bus system that would link additional Midwest cities to the Midwest Regional Rail System. Feeder bus system service is anticipated to begin with the ultimate service level of five round-trip trains per day.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 64 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Himsl, Joel, Rock Island, IL 61299-5000

Organization: Department of the Army

Comment: Reference Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT) letter, August 19, 2009. In response to your letter dated August 19, 2009, the US Army Garrison-Rock Island Arsenal (USAG-RIA) is willing to work toward an agreement in the future phases of this project to allow passenger trains on the Government Bridge and trackage currently leased by the Iowa Interstate Railroad, LTD. Correction is needed in your letter regarding name and ownership of the bridge that may be utilized for this project. The bridge name is "Government Bridge" and is owned by the US Army Garrison-Rock Island Arsenal, not the US Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville. The US Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville administers the current lease of the tracks crossing USAG-RIA between the cities of Davenport, Iowa and Rock Island, Illinois. That Lease is with the Iowa Interstate Railroad. USAG-RIA has discussed with HDR Inc. proposed improvements to the Government Bridge rail system to include signal upgrades and power derailleurs. Plans and specifications for any such improvements would have to be submitted for review and approval by the USAG-RIA, Directorate of Public Works and fully coordinated with the current Lease holder before execution. The US Army Engineer District, Rock Island operates a Lock & Dam located at the Government Bridge. River traffic has priority, therefore when the Government Bridge swing span is open, rail traffic is closed. I look forward to working with you in the future to make USAG-RIA an integral part in transforming America's transportation system through a national network of high-speed rail corridors A copy of this letter has been provided to Ms. Nancy Richardson, Director, Iowa Department of Transportation, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010 and Mr. Brian Ray, Transportation Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc. 8404 Indian Hills Drive, Omaha, NE 68114-4098. If you have any questions please contact Mr Stephen Clark, Chief, Housing and Master Planning Division, USAG-RIA Directorate of Public Works, 309-782-2444, Stephen.a.clark@us.army.mil.

Topic(s): Transportation

FONSI Response: The FONSI has been updated to correct the name and ownership of the Government Bridge that crosses the Mississippi River at Rock Island.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 65 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Himsl, Joel, Rock Island, IL 61299-5000

Organization: Department of the Army

Comment: Reference Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT) letter, subject: Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service Project-Environmental Assessment, August 19, 2009. In response to your letter subject as above, dated August 19, 2009, the US Army Garrison-Rock Island Arsenal (USAG-RIA) is willing to work toward an agreement in the future phases of this project to allow passenger trains on the Government Bridge and trackage currently leased by the Iowa Interstate Railroad, LTD. Correction is needed in your letter regarding name and ownership of the bridge that may be utilized for this project. The bridge name is "Government Bridge" and is owned by the US Army Garrison-Rock Island Arsenal, not the US Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville. The US Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville administers the current lease of the tracks crossing USAG-RIA between the cities of Davenport, Iowa and Rock Island, Illinois. That Lease is with the Iowa Interstate Railroad. USAG-RIA has discussed with HDR Inc. proposed improvements to the Government Bridge rail system to include signal upgrades and power derailleurs. Plans and specifications for any such improvements would have to be submitted for review and approval by the USAG-RIA, Directorate of Public Works and fully coordinated with the current Lease holder before execution. The US Army Engineer District, Rock Island operates a Lock & Dam located at the Government Bridge. River traffic has priority, therefore when the Government Bridge swing span is open, rail traffic is closed. I look forward to working with you in the future to make USAG-RIA an integral part in transforming America's transportation system through a national network of high-speed rail corridors A copy of this letter has been provided to Ms. Barbara H. Stevens, Chief, Environmental Section, Illinois Department of Transportation, 2300 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62764 and Mr. Brian Ray, Transportation Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc. 8404 Indian Hills Drive, Omaha, NE 68114-4098. If you have any questions please contact Mr Stephen Clark, Chief, Housing and Master Planning Division, USAG-RIA Directorate of Public Works, 309-782-2444, Stephen.a.clark@us.army.mil.

Topic(s): Transportation

FONSI Response: The FONSI has been updated to correct the name and ownership of the Government Bridge that crosses the Mississippi River at Rock Island.

Date Received: 10/1/2009 Comment ID: 37 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Hodgden, Dianna, ,

Organization:

Comment: I would like to voice my support for a rail service linking Iowa City with Chicago. Our son lives in Chicago and traveling to see him has become difficult due to older age. This service would benefit us greatly.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/28/2009 Comment ID: 25 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Jirak, David, Davenport, IA 52803

Organization:

Comment: Use Route A...It's the fastest route from QCA to Chicago. If we are going to make Amtrak appeal over automobiles we need to get people to their destinations as fast if not faster than automobiles.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 45 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Johnson, Roger, LeClaire, IA 52753

Organization:

Comment: We use Amtrak to visit two children in Chicago. Anxious for Moline service! No place to park in Chicago - they don't want your car. Tickets are less than auto parking (~ \$50/nt) Traffic delays in Chicago avoided. No charge for bags. No lost bags. Big seats. Can walk around on-board. Can buy last-minute ticket at fair price - unlike airlines. Airports are subsidized, highways are subsidized - so rail merits support also. No toll booths. Can arrive 10 minutes early and just get on - no BIG DEAL. Under 300-400 miles - airlines are not competitively priced.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 43 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Kass, Glenn, Moline, IL 61265

Organization:

Comment: Option A is definitely the choice. It appears to have the most logical build process and timeline. It also has the support of the various entities that must sign-off. Couple of questions: 1) Why are there more environmentally friendly trains in Europe than here? Seems we could further impact that area unless there is a reason? Particulate matter has hurt the QC so what is the impact with this project? Up or down in levels? 2) How would this affect our airport in Moline? I would not want to shift resources and loose that valuable service. 3) We have been told publicly "within two years" this could begin. The charts show 2014 for start of service. Isn't this project more in the "New Deal" area the federal recovery act should serve? Why are there no funds to assist Moline, Iowa City and Wyandot to get this program moving? Moline definitely doesn't have, nor will they have, the \$mil that is needed for the station. I fully support this project. If the extra time is needed to do it right and avoid an "I80" bridge scenario in the future, then take it. However, a better job of communicating expectations to the public would be nice. I want to thank the federal, state, regional and local reps that keep pushing this program. Paul Rumler, et.al, should be recognized. But push harder and make the dollars work.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Topic(s): Transportation

FONSI Response: Federal grant money has been applied for to construct the track, signaling, and related infrastructure improvements. The proposed Moline station is anticipated to be part of the transportation-oriented development planned for downtown Moline, as discussed on pages 2-5 and 3-16 in the EA.

Topic(s): Air Quality

FONSI Response: As discussed on page 3-49 in the EA, emissions of particulate matter would minimally increase.

Date Received: 9/28/2009 Comment ID: 24 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Lange, Richard, LaSalle, IL 61301

Organization:

Comment: 1) the corridor maps discussed on radio PSAs and the home page don't appear on this web site. 2) Absent those corridor maps I'm working from my geographic memory of the rail grades in the area. Comment: The "northern option" from Wyanette, IL into Chicago simply expands service to towns already serviced by Amatrack (i.e.) Mendota, Plano, etc. The "southern option would provide likely provide service to LaSalle, Ottawa, Morris connecting / expanding existing service to Joliet. As a citizen of LaSalle, IL and a user of Amtrak (Mendota connection) my preference would be the "southern option" expanding travel and connection options to thousands of users and non-current users alike. Richard Lange

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/9/2009 Comment ID: 86 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Latino, Mike, Lockport, IL 60441

Organization: Exelon Corporation

Comment: I would be very much in favor of a train route between Chicago and Iowa City. I live in the Joliet area and my daughter is attending University of Iowa. I as well as several of my friends from the area who also have children at U of Iowa, discuss frequently how unfortunate it is that there is only a bus option. This would be a great addition to the transportation grid in the midwest.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/9/2009 Comment ID: 87 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Latino, Mike, Lockport, IL 60441

Organization: Exelon Corporation

Comment: I would be very much in favor of a train route connecting Iowa City and Chicago. I live in the Joliet area and my daughter attends the University of Iowa. I also have several friends who are similarly situated. We often comment on the lack of transportation options. The bus is the most available choice. Train service would greatly enhance the transportation grid in the Midwest.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 55 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Lohman, Brett, Geneseo, IL 61254-0297

Organization: Lohman Companies

Comment: I am writing you to express my support for the passenger rail service between the Quad cities and Chicago with a stop in Geneseo. We would find a stop in Geneseo for convenient for to commute to Chicago to meet with the Insurance Companies we do business with as well as customers we have in Chicago. I would also like to share with you that when my father and uncles came up with the idea to build the Illini Beef plant is Joslin, II (now known as the Tyson plant) passenger service on the Butterworth car was instrumental in getting this development off the ground. My father and uncles made weekly trips to Chicago for many years to get financing, design the plant, interview potential management candidates, sell stock in the company, and line up potential purchasers of the product. They also had to run their own company at the same time so available time was in short supply. The passenger service offered on the Butterworth car allowed them to board downtown Geneseo then meet with each other and other employees and board members on the way up to Chicago and back as well as the time saving of getting off the train downtown Chicago and being just blocks away from their appointments.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 10 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Lorenz, Jr, Francis, Chicago, IL 60646

Organization:

Comment: Hooray! The more viable options for travel, the better. As a nation, we need to expand rail service, especially true "High Speed", as in Europe and Japan. I suppose we can learn to "walk" first with 79 mph trains to Iowa City, but faster trains to Des Moines and Omaha should be considered, too.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted. As discussed on page 2-8 of the EA, trains would operate at a maximum speed of 90 mph between Chicago and Wyanet with implementation of the ultimate service level of five round-trip trains per day.

Date Received: 10/14/2009 Comment ID: 96 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Love, Robert & Sheri, Morris, IL 60450

Organization:

Comment: The train tracks go right along our back yard. Even the freight trains alone are so loud it wakes me out of my sleep. I cant imagine having more train traffic. We have 6 children and dont want to risk anything happening to them. I see kids walking those tracks all the time!! Please do not allow any more train traffic!!

Topic(s): Opposition to B

FONSI Response: As discussed in the EA (pages 3-34, 3-35, and sheets 17 and 18 for the Route B Alternative in Appendix C), noise levels would minimally increase in Morris. Pages 3-26 and 3-27 of the EA discuss public safety; grade crossing warnings would be upgraded and highway congestion would decrease, improving safety.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 53 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Ludwig, Rhonda, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization: Geneseo City of Commerce

Comment: The Board of Directors of Geneseo Chamber of Commerce along with its membership, proudly invites passenger rail into our community. Geneseo businessmen/residents have donated addition land to enhance the existing facility for passenger rail, reaffirming Geneseo's commitment to this great mode of travel. As a leader in Henry county tourism, Geneseo Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Center will offer its services to make certain passengers feel welcomed and included as part of our quaint town upon their arrival. Those who embark on the rail experience from Geneseo will leave confident and informed of all services provided by Amtrak. Passenger Rail, welcome to Geneseo! When you're here, you're home!

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/30/2009 Comment ID: 32 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Marks, Jean, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization: Nash Nash Bean & Ford LLP

Comment: I am writing in support of the State of Iowa and State of Illinois ARRA application for passenger rail service between Chicago, Quad Cities and Iowa City. I can speak for myself and for family that we would most definitely utilize the service. There has been times when our family has missed a family function in the Chicago area because we didn't have reliable transportation and there have been times we've had to take off work to drive an ill family member to Iowa City for a medical appointment. My 9 year old daughter would love to have a gift of train tickets to Chicago to go [to] the museums and the American Girl Store. She and her Dad would be willing to take the train to a Chicago Cubs game. Please consider a passenger railstop in Geneseo. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 38 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Mathias, Dean, Milan, IL 61264

Organization: Quad Cities Transportation Advocacy Group

Comment: Trains and bikes and buses ROCK!! Thanks for the excellent poster graphics. Favor Route A along Hennipin - already train connections for Joliet. Train station need to accommodate bikes parking and protection for bikes from the elements. Amtrak rail cars should be prepared to accommodate a large volume of bicycle ridership, much as the local buses do a great job hauling bicycles on their front racks. Use Europe as [didn't finish thought]. Amtrak should also encourage bicyclists from THE OUTSET!!! Those bicyclists already have the alternative transportation frame of mind. Ads should include bicyclists to encourage riders from one community to travel to another as well as demonstrate the alternative transportation life style. Thank you for your efforts.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 27 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: McGowan, Tommy, Morris, IL 60450

Organization:

Comment: I heard on the local radio about the 2 proposed routes and I believe the route with the CSX way through Joliet and Morris is good, because the other route already sees a lot of Amtrak trains everyday and there are no passenger trains through Morris, Ottawa, or other towns on that line, and those towns probably would appreciate trains to Chicago and the Quad Cities.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/30/2009 Comment ID: 33 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Mickley, Joe, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization: Hanford Insurance Agency

Comment: I am writing in support of the State of Iowa and State of Illinois ARRA application for rail service between Chicago, Quad Cities and Iowa City. Such a service would enhance the growth and development of western Illinois. A 2 way transportation system would improve the economic advantage for both ends Iowa City and the Chicago area. This would enhance the quality of life for many residents of western Illinois. It would open up the culture and education opportunities available in the Chicago area. As an owner of a small business that was established in 1855 in western Illinois this service is critical to the growth and development of our particular area. Rail service would open our community to many residents who work in Chicago but wish to reside in a smaller town. Rail service would be highly utilized by our residents for both employment, educational and entertainment purposes. Thank You for your consideration in this matter.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/8/2009 Comment ID: 80 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Miller, Lora Lea, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization:

Comment: Rail service...A Much Needed Service. Especially to Iowa City as this area has a large contingent of people that are referred to the University of Iowa Medical Center. If you have driven between Geneseo and Iowa City on Interstate 80, you would know that corridor is a raceway. Trucks bumper to bumper 80 to 85 mph all lanes. Then throw in an ambulance or two plus the personal vehicles... not an enjoyable drive and a dangerous one. Rail service would allow patients to get to Iowa City without the hassle of driving. The medical center has a pickup and delivery service already in place. I'm sure the train depot would not be a problem for the hospital service to cover. This would also be a great asset to the veterans in this vicinity as the veterans hospital is in Iowa City. Currently the trip is being covered by van. The problem is getting and keeping drivers to and from the hospital in order to cover the various appointment times. With train service the appointments could be set up according to the train schedule. A valuable service to those who have sacrificed for this country. Public transportation in this part of the United States is nonexistent. What a boon to the economics of the areas involved with the addition of rail service. I believe the rail service would be an excellent investment of taxpayer dollars that would be a benefit to a large segment of the public throughout the northern part of Illinois and Iowa

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 41 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Moline, Norman, Rock Island, IL 61201-5801

Organization: Augustana College

Comment: Route A is the ONLY viable option. Shorter, quicker route is essential. People will ride the train if it takes 3 hours, 20 minutes. They will not if it is 4/5 hours. Saves more fuel. Greater benefits to efforts to reduce emissions. BNSF line allows work with company well-adapted to handling AMTRAK trains. This route also allows better access to key western suburb areas such as Naperville, Oak Brook, the whole high-tech corridor which, to be direct, is MORE important than the Joliet and southwest corridor. Please move forward with Plan A as quickly as possible.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/8/2009 Comment ID: 78 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Moore, Jennifer, ,

Organization:

Comment: I feel this is long overdue. Currently, the route to Iowa from Joliet requires one to go to Chicago first, and becomes a 4 hour + journey. With the current congestion on I80 due to the endless construction from Joliet to Iowa and the repairs on the I80 bridge, this would be a much needed solution.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 50 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Morrison, Charlotte, Rock Island, IL 61201

Organization:

Comment: Bring Amtrak to the Quad Cities ASAP. I would never drive to Chicago again for business or pleasure. Use the proposed Wyanet route to save money and to do as little damage to the environment as possible. *Fastest route is imperative. I completely support passenger rail and all it can bring to the Quad Cities for economic growth and development. Furthermore, continue to make plans and get funding for route from Quad Cities to Iowa City. Many students from Chicago attend college/university here in Quad Cities. Additionally many students from Chicago and Quad Cities attend University of Iowa. Not to mention the huge fan buses for Iowa sports.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/14/2009 Comment ID: 95 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Mowers, Rick, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization: Geneseo Chamber of Commerce

Comment: As a business owner, and resident of Geneseo, I would love to see rail service from Geneseo to Chicago and Iowa City. There are many events in both cities that people from Geneseo attend. Even more people would attend these events if rail transportation was convenient. I would like to attend concerts and theatre events in both locations. Many people are sports fans of the Iowa Hawkeyes, and Chicago teams, and would welcome the convenience of rail transportation to these events. It would also reduce pollution. There are also events in Geneseo that others would be able to participate in via rail transportation.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/1/2009 Comment ID: 57 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Neff, Gerald, Pleasant Valley, IA 52767

Organization: Iowa Chapter Sierra Club

Comment: I agree with the findings of the Iowa and Illinois DOT that Alternative A would be the better choice. We need a third choice for travel in this area other than automobile or air travel. Rail would provide that third choice. Now that the price of gasoline has dropped the rail choice loses some of its attraction. However, fuel prices will continue to fluctuate and if the rail fares can be competitive with driving costs, the chances of people using the trains increases. Reviving rail transportation in this country is an absolute must.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Name: Nelson, Richard, Moline, IL 61265

Organization: Fish and Wildlife Service

Comment: This is in response to your letter of August 17, 2009, requesting our comments on the proposed Chicago to Iowa City Intercity Passenger Rail Service Project – Environmental Assessment by the Federal Railroad Administration, Iowa Department of Transportation, and the Illinois Department of Transportation. For the purposes of this letter we will provide information relative to the portion of the project within Iowa. Our data indicate that the species on the enclosed list may occur in the counties of your proposed action. Descriptions of the habitat requirements are included with the list. You may use these descriptions to help you determine if there is suitable habitat within your project area. In order to determine if your project “may affect” species on the enclosed list, we invite you to use a new tool the Service has designed to help with the consultation process – the Section 7(a)(92) Technical Assistance webpage (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/section7/s7process/index/htm>). By following the instructions, you can determine what your action area is, whether listed species may be found within the action area, and if the project may affect listed species. You will find several products on the site that can streamline the consultation process for this and future projects. When determining if listed species may be located within a project area, you can download county-specific species lists for all of the states in Region 3. Species specific best management practices will also eventually be available. Example letters and templates are available to assist with documenting “no effect” determinations and preparing requests for “not likely to adversely affect” concurrence. These comments are provided as technical assistance in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq). National Wetland Inventory maps indicate that there may be wetlands within and adjacent to the project area. These areas may be affected by the proposed project. The Corps of Engineers is the Federal agency responsible for wetland regulation, and we recommend that you contact them for assistance in delineating the wetland types and acreage within the project boundary. Priority consideration should be given to avoid impacts to these wetland areas. Any future activities in the study area that would alter these wetlands may require a Section 404 permit. Unavoidable impacts will require a mitigation plan to compensate for any losses of wetland functions and values. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Clock Tower building, P.O. Box 2004, Rock Island, Illinois, 61201, should be contacted for information about the permit process. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Heidi Woeber of my staff at (309) 757-5800 extension 209. Attachment: Habitat Descriptions for Federal Threatened and Endangered Species in Scott, Muscatine, Cedar and Johnson Counties, Iowa. The endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) has been noted as occurring in Muscatine County. Indiana bats are considered to potentially occur in counties along and south of I-80 in Iowa. Any area with forested habitat potentially provide suitable habitat for this species. Indiana bats migrate seasonally between winter hibernacula and summer roosting habitats. Winter hibernacula include caves and abandoned mines. Females form nursery colonies under the loose bark of trees (dead or alive) and/or cavities, where each female gives birth to a single young in June or early July. A single colony may utilize a number of roost trees during the summer, typically a primary roost tree and several alternates. The species of size of tree does not appear to influence whether Indiana bats utilize a tree for roosting provided the appropriate bark structure is present. During the summer, the Indiana bat frequents the corridors of small streams with riparian woods as well as mature upland forests. It forages for insects along stream corridors, within the canopy of floodplain and upland forests, over clearings with early successional vegetation (old fields), along the borders of cropland, along wooded fencerows, over farm ponds, and in pastures. Suitable summer habitat in Iowa is considered to have the following characteristics within a ½ mile radius of a project site: 1) forest cover of 15% or greater; 2) permanent water; 3) one or more of the following tree species: shagbark and shellbark hickory that may be dead or alive, and dead bitternut hickory, American elm, slippery elm, eastern cottonwood, silver maple, white oak, red oak, post oak, and shingle oak with slabs or plates of loose bark; 4) potential roost trees with 10% or more peeling or loose bark. If the project site contains any habitat that fits the above description, it may be necessary to conduct a survey to determine whether the bat is present. In addition a search for this species should be made prior to any cave-impacting activities. If habitat is present or Indiana bats are known to be present, they must not be harmed, harassed or disturbed, and this field office should be contacted for further assistance. The eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) is listed as threatened and known to occur in Johnson County. It occupies mesic to wet grassland habitats. There is no critical habitat designated for this species. Federal regulations prohibit any commercial activity involving this species or the destruction, malicious damage, or removal of this species from Federal land or any other lands in knowing violation of State law or regulation, including State criminal trespass law. Growth of the prairie fringed orchid begins in May and flowering occurs in July. This species should be

search for whenever wet prairie remnants or other wet meadows are encountered. The prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostchya*) is listed as threatened and considered to potentially occur statewide in Iowa based on historical records and habitat distribution, although we have no record of occurrences in Cedar, Johnson, Scott, and Muscatine Counties. It occupies dry to mesic prairies with gravelly soil. There is no critical habitat designated for this species. Federal regulations prohibit any commercial activity involving this species or the destruction, malicious damage, or removal of this species from Federal land or any other lands in knowing violation of State law or regulation, including State criminal trespass law. This species should be searched for whenever prairie remnants are encountered. The western prairie fringed orchid (*Plantanthera praeclara*) is listed as threatened and considered to potentially occur statewide in Iowa based on historical records and habitat distribution although we have no record of occurrences in Cedar, Johnson, Scott, and Muscatine Counties. It occupies wet to mesic grassland habitats. There is no critical habitat designated for this species. Federal regulations prohibit any commercial activity involving this species or the destruction, malicious damage, or removal of this species from Federal land or any other lands in knowing violation of State law or regulation, including State criminal trespass law. This species should be searched for whenever prairie remnants are encountered. The endangered Higgins eye pearl mussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*) is listed for the Mississippi River north of Lock and Dam 20 which includes Muscatine and Scott Counties. This species prefers sand/gravel substrates with a swift current and is most often found in the main channel border or an open, flowing side channel. The project lies within the range of the eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus c. cataenatus*), a docile rattlesnake that is declining throughout its national range and is currently a Federal Candidate species. The snake is currently listed as endangered by the State of Iowa and is known to occur in Johnson and Muscatine Counties. Your proactive efforts to conserve this species may help avoid the need to list the species under the Endangered Species Act in the future. Due to their reclusive nature, we encourage early project coordination to avoid potential impacts to massasaugas and their habitat. The massasauga is often found in or near wet areas, including wetlands, wet prairie, or nearby woodland or shrub edge habitat. This often includes dry goldenrod meadows with a mosaic of early successional woody species such as dogwood or multiflora rose. Wet habitat and nearby dry edges are utilized by the snakes, especially during the spring and fall. Dry upland areas up to 1.5 miles away are utilized during the summer, if available. The project lies within the range of the freshwater sheepsnout mussel (*Plethobasus cyphus*) that is declining throughout its national range and is currently a Federal Candidate species. It is known to occur in Johnson, Muscatine and Scott Counties. Significant declines relative to its historical distribution and its small isolated remaining populations continue to be threatened.

Topic(s): Natural Resources

FONSI Response: Comments noted. As noted in the EA in Section 3.17.2, specific construction impacts for listed and candidate species will be evaluated further in the Tier 2 Project Level NEPA review. Any required field work and consultation, if needed, will be conducted as part of the Tier 2 Project Level NEPA review. The errata section of the FONSI includes reference to the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake and the Sheepsnout mussel in accordance with the attachment to your letter.

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 48 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Orgeron, Anna, Rock Island, IL 61201

Organization:

Comment: Would like to see northern route - soon?

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 5 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Pakala, James, Missouri, MO 63021

Organization:

Comment: My wife and I try to avoid driving because it is private, not public, transportation and long drives can be life-threatening (only in part because I fall asleep at the wheel) or medically harmful (my wife has a muscle disease that driving or sitting in a car for long periods negatively affects). As to flying, the cost and lack of availability to smaller cities is a huge problem. The environmental damage of train service is a fraction of that caused by planes and highway vehicles.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 7 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Parkyn, John, Stoddard, WI 54658

Organization:

Comment: I believe the Northern Route would run more closely through the center of the Chicago area's population, allowing it to serve more riders more easily than the Southern Route.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 39 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Persampiers, Patrick, Geneseo, IL 61254

Organization: Balfour Beatty Rail

Comment: I think Route A Alternative would work. Also the train station at Geneseo should be located on the west end of town and not in the middle of town where it might block two crossings.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted. As noted on page 2-5 in the EA, the proposed Geneseo station location will be determined and documented in a Tier 2 project-level NEPA document.

Date Received: 10/1/2009 Comment ID: 56 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Petrella, Suzanne, Yorkville, IL 60560

Organization: Kendall County Illinois

Comment: Alternative A is a much preferred route as the population in this area is in great need of additional transportation options. Kendall County has statistically been one of the fastest growing counties in the nation during the past several years. Many residents here would appreciate Alternative A as would developers and the business community for all the economic opportunities presented. Convenience is key, as we have all struggled with the challenges of downtown transportation. Future additional service would be most welcome as a way to ease highway congestion.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 46 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Pleshe, David, Coal Valley, IL 61240

Organization:

Comment: Plan A looks most promising. Less environmental impact and quicker service. This plan needs to be "fast-tracked"!

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 47 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Pleshe, Becky, Coal Valley, IL 61240

Organization:

Comment: I am in favor of the Chicago to Iowa City rail service. We really need this in the Quad Cities. I prefer Plan A but would be happy with either plan.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/22/2009 Comment ID: 3 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Powell, Rick, Ottawa, IL 61350

Organization:

Comment: First, I think there should be more public hearings in IL, and closer to the people who might use the service. It is nearly 1 1/2 hours to the Quad City meeting from where I live. There are thousands of potential customers of this service who live closer to Chicago, and I am doubtful you will capture more than a few people from these areas at your IL public hearing. Secondly, I am asking if any of the content of the report will be made available on-line on the 24th of September. I am not sure if I will have time to visit the library at La Salle. I will have plenty of comments following my review of the EA.

Topic(s): General Comment

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 42 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Rick, Kyle, Davenport, IA 52806

Organization: The Arc

Comment: Train service to Chicago from the Qua Cities would be heavily used by the business community on a periodic commuting basis for meetings/conferences and the like. Route A is definitely preferable not only on a cost basis, but on use and time basis. It would directly compete in terms of commute time for those using I80 and I88. Recreational use will also be high to commute for entertainment in Chicago and also to go to Iowa city for sporting events and theater/music performances. Let's do this!

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/24/2009 Comment ID: 14 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Riley, Jim, LaSalle, IL 61301

Organization: Hometown National Bank

Comment: Given the opportunity to expand rail service in the northern IL area, adding additional communities to a cross state route, I strongly suggest using Alternative B, through LaSalle, Ottawa and Morris. The Princeton, Mendota route is already being served by rail service. Offering this area an alternative route and destinations is logical if one of the goals is to expand economical public transportation. The combined populations of the Alternative B route have no legitimate public transportation east or west. The communities mentioned have a combined population which is much larger than the existing Alternative A route. I understand some preliminary study has been done supporting a LaSalle to Joliet route. That information may provide additional support for an Alternative B decision. Alternative B through LaSalle and Morris will expand rail service and open up an additional market. Thank you for your consideration.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/30/2009 Comment ID: 66 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Rogers, Mike, Springfield, IL 62794-9276

Organization: Illinois EPA, Bureau of Air

Comment: Below is a link from Michael Leslie of Region V to what I think is the most recent final rule (July 17, 2006, 71 FR 40420) dealing with general conformity de minimis thresholds. It includes that same weird language that doesn't specifically address moderate and marginal ozone NAAs, but just "Other areas inside (outside) an ozone transport region." The threshold for such areas outside an ozone transport region is 100 tpy for both VOC and Nox. For Illinois PM2.5 nonattainment areas the threshold is also 100 tpy and should be assessed for direct PM2.5, SO2, and Nox emissions. Let me know if you have any questions. [<http://www.epa.gov/air/genconform/documents/Jul06/EPA-HQ-OAR-2004-0491-0026.pdf>]

Topic(s): Air Quality

FONSI Response: The FONSI has been updated to evaluate emissions of sulfur dioxide from train operations and diversion of vehicle and plane trips between Chicago and Quad Cities.

Date Received: 10/8/2009 Comment ID: 81 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Rohr, Lynda, Shorewood, IL 60404

Organization:

Comment: Having the train stop in Joliet and go to Geneseo would be beneficial for me so that I may see my daughter and 3 grandsons...it is 111 miles from my home to hers, and the cost of gas is hard on my wallet, plus I am handicapped and hard for me to drive the hour and forty five minutes plus potty break. So if I had a vote in this, it would be yes!

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/6/2009 Comment ID: 72 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Schlake, Diane, Naperville, IL 60565

Organization: Naperville Police Dept

Comment: The existing rail will limit the speed. Need to invest in new infrastructure and create High Speed Rail like in Asia and Europe...US is so far behind, because we love our cars

Topic(s): Alternatives

FONSI Response: As discussed in Section 2.4 of the EA, the maximum speed of operation would increase to 90 mph from Chicago to Wyanet with implementation of the ultimate service level of five round-trip trains per day, as envisioned by the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.

Date Received: 10/8/2009 Comment ID: 79 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Sessions, Carl, Iowa City, IA

Organization: City High Little Hawk

Comment: My name is Carl Sessions, and I'm the news editor at the City High Little Hawk in Iowa City. We are interested in doing a story about the possible train that would go from Chicago to Iowa City, but we have some questions. Is there anyone you could recommend me to talk to about it?

Topic(s): General Comment

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 15 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Sheridan, Arthur, Plano, IL 60545

Organization: City of Plano

Comment: Please provide mailing address for comments.

Topic(s): General Comment

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 36 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Sheridan, Arthur, Plano, IL 60545

Organization: City of Plano

Comment: The City of Plano, IL. IS DEFINITELY IN FAVOR and wishes to support the routing of the rail line thru Plano, IL.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/25/2009 Comment ID: 67 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Simon, Marisol, Chicago, IL 60606

Organization: Federal Transit Administration

Comment: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is providing these comments in regard to the proposed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois, and Iowa City, Iowa. Since our fellow U.S. Department of Transportation operating division, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), is a cooperating agency in this effort, our remarks will only address this project's potential impact on our grantees, and not the NEPA process. In each of the two (2) "build" alternatives, existing and proposed commuter rail services in the Chicago metropolitan area provided by Metra will be affected by the proposed project. We understand that train scheduling, both passenger and freight, will be a major issue in the operation of the proposed new service. Our concern is that there is or will be sufficient track capacity along the proposed intercity passenger route to allow both existing and proposed passenger and freight services to not be negatively impacted by the additional service. Slower travel times for commuters will lead to inconveniences for them, and a loss of ridership for Metra. The resulting loss in operating revenue for commuter rail services will only magnify the financial struggle that Metra already is incurring. Additionally, the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK), which is headquartered in Moline, Illinois, and operates municipal bus transit service in the Illinois Quad Cities, is pursuing a commuter rail component to its system. This planned service will use the same tracks as the proposed Chicago – Iowa City Intercity Passenger Service Project. The analysis of this intercity project should consider the potential inclusion of the MetroLINK commuter rail service, when evaluating operations and track capacity. We appreciate the opportunity provided to us to respond to the information gathering phase of the environmental review process. We ask that you continue to keep us at the FTA – Region V informed of the further development of this project. If you have any questions or comments concerning our remarks, please contact Steve Polito at (312) 353-1552.

Topic(s): Transportation

FONSI Response: The errata section of the FONSI has been updated to provide information on Metra operations in Chicago. The Amtrak feasibility study considered all Chicago train operations, including Metra operations and, as discussed in the EA (pages 3-4 and 3-5, 3-11, 3-81 and 3-82), identified Eola Yard in Aurora as the major potential source of rail traffic congestion. A track 1 grant under the Federal Railroad Administration's High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail program has been applied for to implement changes at the Eola Yard to improve train traffic flow (see Section 3.21 of the EA). The errata section of the FONSI has been updated to include a brief discussion of the proposed commuter rail system in Moline that would be operated by MetroLINK. Future Tier 2 Project-level analysis will be conducted to determine the impacts to Metra and MetroLINK commuter rail system operations from the Chicago to Iowa City Intercity passenger rail service.

Date Received: 10/12/2009 Comment ID: 91 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Souferis, Athena, Skokie, IL 60077

Organization:

Comment: This is needed so much...the university students and their families have no way of getting to Iowa from Chicago and the reverse unless they drive. This is unheard in this time and age w/such demand and such a large student body.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/30/2009 Comment ID: 31 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Steinbrecher, Lew, Moline, IL 61265

Organization: City of Moline

Comment: Thank you for both this email and the voice message you left on my phone here at City Hall this morning. I appreciate the opportunity to express my support for the intercity passenger rail service being proposed between Chicago and Iowa City through Moline.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 11 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Stroka, Thomas, Michigan City, IN 46360

Organization: Midwest High Speed Rail Association

Comment: I firmly support the efforts to build a high speed rail connecting Iowa City to Chicago Union Station. I grew up along the BNSF line in the suburbs of Chicago and my whole family continues to live on both sides of the tracks there. With updated crossings along the rail line, I see no problem using the existing track for a high speed rail to Iowa City. The major problem I see is the number of stops along the way. Every high speed train I took when I lived in France had only one or two stops before the final destination...I believe the only stops should be Joliet, LaSalle, Moline and Iowa City. The train will become a more viable option for travelers only if it is as convenient in terms of getting to their destination as quickly as (or much more quickly than) driving. Good luck with the work that lies ahead of you.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/8/2009 Comment ID: 82 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Studer, Judith, Joliet, IL 60432

Organization:

Comment: Absolutely, YES--the ability to take a train to Iowa City would be a huge positive opportunity!

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/6/2009 Comment ID: 70 Closed Comment Source: Info Line

Name: Stumpe, Dan, Naperville, IL 60564

Organization:

Comment: I gotta tell ya, I'm really excited about the Chicago to Iowa City route. I think it's about time - it's a great idea for getting kids back and forth to the University of Iowa. I hope you can extend it - in time - to Des Moines and maybe up to Ames to get more students. I think it's long overdue. It's one that we will be using and using often.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 44 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Terronez, Darrell, Silvis, IL 61282

Organization: Western Illinois University

Comment: Meeting/presentation was extremely informative. Rail from Iowa City to Chicago and from Chicago to Iowa City is exciting. This area will benefit greatly financially and culturally. Passenger rail will eliminate traffic congestion on the interstate/highways and be better for the environment. This is a safe way to travel. Traveling by rail allows you to relax, enjoy the scenery and meet new people. This is very exciting! Hope it happens soon.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 30 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Tomzik, David, Wheeling, IL 60690

Organization:

Comment: Route option B will provide improved mobility, access and economic development to the Illinois River communities. This line at one time supported rail service which can return. The Joliet- LaSalle corridor is a well defined corridor with strong interaction between these communities. In addition, this line will connect with the 110mph line to Bloomington, Springfield and St Louis at Joliet.

Topic(s): Support B

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/27/2009 Comment ID: 18 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Turpin, Gary, LeClaire, IA 52722

Organization:

Comment: I have used the Amtrak Service from Galesburg to Chicago three times in the last year and find it wonderful. When Quad Cities link is completed I will use it at least monthly or even more often. I prefer Alternative A. I would favor seeing this "Fast Tracked" in some fashion. Use some of that Obama money to get this done quickly.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/23/2009 Comment ID: 4 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Wallace, Ryan, Chicago, IL 60613

Organization:

Comment: As a resident of Chicago, graduate of University of Iowa, and someone who has family in the Des Moines metro area, I am thoroughly excited about the prospects of a Chicago-Iowa City rail connection. Many rural citizens never experience the great city of Chicago because the drive can be so daunting. Many students at the U of Iowa come from the Chicago-land area and have extremely limited options to return home for weekends and holidays. I hope that due diligence is done to determine a route that has the least impact, but I wholeheartedly believe a rail connection from Iowa City to Chicago is to everyone's mutual benefit.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/8/2009 Comment ID: 77 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Weber, Sue, Joliet, IL 60433

Organization:

Comment: this would be great, we currently travel to my sisters house in Colo Iowa several times a year, and this would wonderful as we wouldn't have to deal with that horrible semi truck traffic. It would even be better if it went all the way to Des Moines or at least Ames Iowa.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/30/2009 Comment ID: 34 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Werner, Ken, Colona, IL 61241-0496

Organization: Werner Restoration Services Inc.

Comment: I just want to voice my support for the proposed rail service from Chicago , thru the Quad Cities and Geneseo area to Iowa City. This would have a huge impact on the Quad City economy along with Geneseo. My home town of Geneseo would benefit from this service both economically and socially. My family would use it for both business and pleasure. Trains have had a big impact on our community before and it will help in future. My business, WERNER RESTORATION SERVICES with our 30 employees , frequently travel to Chicago and Iowa City for training and could use this service. Geneseo has land that was donated years ago just for this possibility so the interest is here. Thanks for your time.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/29/2009 Comment ID: 40 Closed Comment Source: Meeting Comment Form

Name: Werner, Ken, Colona, IL 61241-0496

Organization: Werner Restoration Services Inc.

Comment: My opinion is rail service not only to Chicago but also west to Omaha will benefit the Quad Cities and the surrounding areas a great deal. I would like to specifically see Geneseo included as a stop. The City of Geneseo has a great interest in the rail service. We have land already donated for the location. We have a fall event called "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" that has shown tremendous growth in the past few years, with a great interest in the trains that have been part of the events. Personally, I have 10 brothers and sisters that travel a great deal and who would be interested in a safe, inexpensive mode of transportation. My family attends many Chicago sporting events each year and have driven to Princeton to catch the train. My son has just graduated from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and would have used this to commute. My sister lives in Omaha and would use it. I am the owner of Werner Restoration Services of Colona, IL, and have many employees who receive training in Chicago and Omaha. We all feel the rail service would be an awesome addition to the whole Quad City community.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/14/2009 Comment ID: 102 Closed Comment Source: Letter

Name: Westlake, Kenneth, Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Organization: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Comment: Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviews and comments on major federal action. Typically, these reviews focus on environmental Impact Statements (EIS), but we also have the discretion to review and comment on other environmental documents prepared under NEPA if interest and resources permit. EPA has reviewed the Draft Tier 1 Service Level Environmental Assessment (EA) for the above project. This letter provides our comments on that document and possible impacts related to the proposed project. We previously provided scoping comments for this project on September 22, 2009 regarding purpose and need, alternatives, environmental impacts, and mitigation of unavoidable impacts. We appreciate this document noted air quality improvements anticipated and the environmental savings from traffic and fuel efficiencies for the alternatives considered. Surface waters and wetlands were mentioned as possibly being impacted where bridge and culvert work may be needed, but identification of these sites and best management practices to be utilized are deferred to Tier II NEPA documentation. The preferred alternative requires a connecting segment be constructed in Wyanet, Illinois, and will need work done within the Pond Creek floodplain. This will be addresses in a separate Tier II document. We acknowledge that the Tier I document provides extensive consideration of noise and vibration impacts, which is helpful; it indicates alternative A may impact 1,928 receptors and alternative B may impact, 1,801 receptors. Although Appendix B provided some demographic information on Environmental Justice communities (EJ), it was not clear whether the alternate B noise impacts were focused in EJ areas. This Tier I document also did not identify sensitive receptor locations for noise, such as hospitals and schools. The Tier I EA noted that these receptors might be more impacted under a future scenario of 5 round trip trains per day at increased speeds to 90 miles per hour (mph). That scenario will be considered in a supplemental Tier I EA evaluation. The present document is focused upon the addition of 2 round trip trains per day along an established active corridor, operating at current 79 mph maximum speeds. At this level of operations, minimal impacts are anticipated. Greater impacts are anticipated if and when the service for this corridor upgrades to 5 round trip trains per day with speeds increased from Chicago to Wyanet, Illinois to 90 mph. Your Agency proposed that these environmental impacts will be discussed in a supplemental Tier I EA. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Tier I document. We request that IDTO provide us with further Tier I and Tier II EA documents for this corridor project. If you have any questions on our comments, please contact me or Norm west of my staff, by phone at (312) 353-5682 or by email at west.norman@epa.gov.

Topic(s): Noise

FONSI Response: FRA identified its approach for the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program (HSIPR) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) system level program in the June 17, 2009 Guidance (74 Fed. Reg. 29900 (June 23, 2009)). The noise analysis conducted for this Tier 1 EA was a screening effort to determine the relative impacts of each alternative and to determine where additional noise analysis may be required. The Tier 1 EA was prepared in accordance with recent FRA guidance including: Compliance with NEPA in Implementing HSIPR (August 13, 2009); Overview of HSIPR NEPA Requirements (August 14, 2009), and the June 17, 2009 Guidance (74 Fed. Reg. 29900 (June 23, 2009)). The noise analysis for Tier 2 Project-level NEPA evaluation will be conducted at a more detailed level to determine impacts to specific communities (including environmental justice communities) and sensitive receptors such as hospitals and schools and other noise and vibration sensitive land uses identified in FRA guidelines (High-Speed Ground Transportation Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (October 2005)). The Tier 2 noise and vibration impact assessments will be performed in accordance those guidelines.

Date Received: 10/14/2009 Comment ID: 97 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Wilkins, Jeff, Yorkville, IL 60560

Organization: Kendall County Board

Comment: The Kendall County Board unanimously passed the resolution in support of alternative "A" at the County Board meeting held Tuesday, October 6, 2009.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 9/28/2009 Comment ID: 19 Closed Comment Source: Website

Name: Wolff, Sue, Sterling, IL 61081

Organization:

Comment: I would be beyond HAPPY if the train would be using the BNSF rail and go through Princeton Illinois. My family would be riding it instead of driving from Sterling to Chicago and back again every weekend just to see our grandchild.

Topic(s): Support A

FONSI Response: Comment noted

Date Received: 10/2/2009 Comment ID: 60 Closed Comment Source: Email

Name: Yapp, John, ,

Organization: City of Iowa City

Comment: Theresa, Dale Helling (Iowa City City Manager) asked me to contact you. Thank you for the notice of the Tier 1 Environmental Review for passenger rail service between Chicago and Iowa City. We are certainly excited about the opportunity to bring back passenger rail service to our area, and we appreciate your efforts in obtaining public comment. To that end, let us know if we can provide any assistance in obtaining public input between now and October 15. The Iowa City City Council has recently approved a resolution of support for passenger rail service, and we have obtained several other letters of support from community stakeholders which we have forwarded to Amanda Martin at Iowa DOT. Let us know if you would like copies of these also.

Topic(s): General Support

FONSI Response: Thank you. Comment noted