

April 16, 2019
Senate Transportation Committee
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301



Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Barre City Council, I write to support modification of Sec. 34 of H.529 of the Transportation Bill. This section, Technical Analysis of Commuter Rail Service Utilizing Self-propelled Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Rail Cars, represents a critical next step in understanding the viability of delivering passenger rail in several communities, which could include the City of Barre.

As Mayor, I was approached about concerns with the language and that the City of Barre was not included. We wish to convey our support to create a pathway to a passenger rail system that could enormously benefit our community as well as the future transportation needs of the State of Vermont. Although not included in the House of Representatives version of H.529, we believe the Senate Transportation Committee should consider including the City of Barre as part of the technical analysis in Sec. 34. Alternatively, if the Senate Transportation Committee believes the scope and/or risk of the analysis seems too large for Montpelier-St. Albans corridor and eliminating the language altogether, the Barre City Council suggests a smaller study be conducted on the area between Montpelier and the City of Barre.

We believe that the creation of a community passenger rail network connecting Vermont's cities and towns through an integrated public transportation system would help support several transportation initiatives, including the construction of Montpelier's new transit center and the current movement of Agency of Transportation staff from Montpelier to the City of Barre. These efforts would also support the State's Comprehensive Energy Plan ("CEP") specifically recognizes passenger rail as a key component of a modern transportation energy future that will reduce the greenhouse gas impacts of the transportation sector.

Transportation continues to be one of the largest barriers for individuals seeking employment or to receive necessary medical services. The use of rail supports not only direct quality of life and environmental benefits but facilitates economic development between communities through the addition of rail stops and stations, while attracting millennials, young families, and quality jobs to our downtowns and throughout Vermont.

Thank you,

Lucas Herring
Mayor, City of Barre