



SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION

# CONNECTING THE SOUTH WITH PASSENGER RAIL

April 8, 2025

**Y'ALL ABOARD.**



# WHO WE ARE

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**The Southern Rail Commission is a champion for passenger rail restoration efforts throughout the South.**

The multi-state commission, created by Congress in 1982, includes commissioners from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama who work collaboratively to engage and inform public and private rail interests to support and influence Southeast rail initiatives.

## OUR GOALS

- 1 Provide transportation choices for the people we serve
- 2 Promote the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of people and goods to enhance economic development along rail corridors
- 3 Engage federal, state and local decision makers
- 4 Facilitate emergency evacuation routes
- 5 Pursue funding for train station planning and implementation
- 6 Support state departments of transportation





# COMMISSIONERS

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## MISSISSIPPI

**Knox Ross, Chairman**  
**Kay Kell**  
**Katie Hood**  
**Brian Fulton**  
**Frankie Castiglia, Jr.**  
**Dewitt Jerome Wall III**

## ALABAMA

**Toby Bennington, Secretary**  
**David Clark**  
**Dennis Stripling**  
**Ellis Foster**  
**Stephen Worley**  
**Steven Brom**

## LOUISIANA

**John Spain, Vice Chair**  
**Mayor Friday Ellis**  
**Rep. Neil Riser**  
**Adrian Perkins**  
**Andrew Kilshaw**  
**Roy Woodruff**

# WHAT WE DO:



Public engagement



Communications



Policy and legislative advocacy



Partnerships and coalition building



Seek funding for priority projects



Convenings and meetings

# PLAN FOR CONNECTIVITY





- ✓ Provides mobility and travel options, and improves access for underserved communities
- ✓ Reduces traffic congestion along the highly congested interstate corridors
- ✓ Offers critical mode for hurricane evacuation within communities along the rail route during times of disasters or emergencies
- ✓ Expands employment opportunities connecting to job centers along the corridor
- ✓ Connects rural populations to education and medical institutions
- ✓ Generates savings by reducing fuel and time spent in traffic during long commutes
- ✓ Improves the environment by reducing carbon emissions
- ✓ Offers safe, friendly, high-quality option for travel that can be enjoyed by all ages



## NEW ORLEANS TO BATON ROUGE:

**\$750,000**

*SRC Station Planning Grants (2016)*

Awarded to St. John Parish and the Cities of Baton Rouge and Gonzales

**\$20 MILLION**

*Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grant (RAISE) (August 2022)*

Awarded to the Cities of Baton Rouge and Gonzales for real estate acquisition, station design, and construction for train stations



In 2022, LA DOTD started the environmental review process along the corridor and submitted a grant application for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program funding to support the replacement of the Bonnet Carré bridge. Although not awarded in first round, FRA encouraged LA DOTD to re-submit in the subsequent round.



## NEW ORLEANS TO BATON ROUGE:

### **\$37.5 MILLION**

The Louisiana Legislature approved funds to meet federal dollar-matching obligations (*June 2022*)

### **\$500,000**

*FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program (December 2023)*

Awarded to DOTD to prepare a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing a service development plan

### **\$400,000**

*FRA Interstate Rail Compacts Grant (March 2024)*

Supports SRC's administrative capacity, operations, and initiatives to expand passenger rail operations across the South



The 2014 feasibility study was updated in October 2023 to include current projections for operating costs and ridership.

**LA DOTD is underway with the corridor study and service development plan.**



## NEW ORLEANS TO MOBILE:

### **\$1 MILLION**

*SRC Station Planning Grants (2016)*

Awarded to the cities of Anniston, Birmingham, Mobile, Pascagoula, Biloxi, Gulfport, Bay St. Louis, Baton Rouge, and Gonzales and St. John Parish

### **\$1.3 MILLION**

*SRC Station Construction Grants (September 2021)*

Awarded to the cities of Gulfport, Bay St. Louis, Pascagoula, and Birmingham

### **\$33 MILLION**

*Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (CRISI) (June 2019)*

Awarded to the cities of Gulfport, Bay St. Louis, Pascagoula, and Birmingham

### **\$5.45 MILLION**

*Restoration and Enhancement Program (R&E) (May 2019)*

Funds provided to Amtrak for operating expenses for the years 1 - 3 of service



Federal grants leverage matching funding from the States of Louisiana and Mississippi and the City of Mobile.



## NEW ORLEANS TO MOBILE:

**\$178,435,333**

*Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (September 2023)*  
Appropriated by Senator Wicker, MS to restore Gulf Coast Rail Service

**\$400,000**

*FRA Interstate Rail Compacts Grant (March 2024)*  
Supports administrative capacity, operations, and initiatives to expand passenger rail operations across the South

**\$500,000**

*FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program (December 2023)*  
To prepare a scope, schedule, and cost estimate for preparing a service development plan

Amtrak and the City of Mobile are finalizing construction for the station platform and layover track. These projects are the final pieces of infrastructure needed before the operation can begin.





## NEW ORLEANS TO MOBILE:

### SERVICE START PROJECTED FOR JUNE 2025!

Twice daily trains will originate in New Orleans and Mobile with stops in Bay St. Louis, Gulfport, Biloxi, and Pascagoula.

Offers same-day connections in both directions daily to Amtrak *City of New Orleans* trains between New Orleans and Chicago via Memphis.

Also offers next-day connections in New Orleans to Amtrak *Crescent* trains to and from New York via Atlanta, and Amtrak *Sunset Limited* trains to and from Los Angeles via Tucson, San Antonio and Houston.

Tickets, fares and schedules will be available on Amtrak.com when a service start date is announced in the coming weeks.





## I-20 CORRIDOR:

**\$500,000**

*FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program (December 2023)*

Project team is underway with preparing the scope, schedule, and cost estimate for service development plan

**\$400,000**

*FRA Interstate Rail Compacts Grant (March 2024)*

Supports administrative capacity, operations, and initiatives to expand passenger rail across the South

An Economic Impact Study by Rail Passengers Association finds the service could generate \$50.7 million\* in new economic benefits to communities along the route, and an additional \$207 million for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas annually.

\*2023 DOLLARS





SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION

**THANK YOU!**



[SouthernRailCommission.org](https://SouthernRailCommission.org)



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**Y'ALL ABOARD.**