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Governor Rick Scott
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

RE: High Speed Rail in Florida – Renowned American businessman Warren Buffett touts benefits of rail to investors

Dear Governor Scott:

I read with interest this weekend the letter from Warren Buffett, one of America's most renowned investors, to the shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., regarding his enthusiasm for rail investments. The "Oracle of Omaha" is particularly bullish on rail travel and transport in the United States. Buffett points out that Berkshire Hathaway performed better than the broader market due to its investment in rail.

Buffet's championing of rail investments provides an important lesson for Florida, job growth and our long-term economic future. Mr. Buffett states in a pertinent part:

The highlight of 2010 was our acquisition of Burlington Northern Santa Fe, a purchase that's working out even better than I expected. It now appears that owning this railroad will increase Berkshire's "normal" earning power... Since we've quickly replenished the cash, the economics of this transaction have turned out very well.

...

[R]ailroads have major cost and environmental advantages over trucking, their main competitor. Last year BNSF moved each ton of freight it carried a record 500 miles on a single gallon of diesel fuel. That's *three* times more fuel-efficient than trucking is, which means our railroad owns an important advantage in operating costs. Concurrently, our country gains because of reduced greenhouse emissions and a much smaller need for imported oil. When traffic travels by rail, society benefits.

Over time, the movement of goods in the United States will increase, and BNSF should get its full share of the gain. The railroad will need to invest massively to bring about this growth, but no one is better situated than Berkshire to supply the funds required.

Mr. Buffett's positive outlook on rail provides a valuable lesson for the State of Florida. Like freight, when people travel by rail, the benefits are extensive, including avoiding congestion, reducing oil consumption, and reliability. Indeed, I traveled on Interstate 4 this weekend and found myself caught in a significant traffic jam. Congestion will only worsen over the next decade unless we plan ahead. If turmoil in the Middle East leads to higher gas prices, Florida will be well-situated with a modern travel option. Don't miss this opportunity to tap the optimistic "can do" spirit of America as Mr. Buffet's so aptly describes:

Money will always flow toward opportunity, and there is an abundance of that in America.

Commentators today often talk of "great uncertainty." But think back, for example, to December 6, 1941, October 18, 1987 and September 10, 2001. No matter how serene today may be, tomorrow is *always* uncertain.

Don't let that reality spook you. Throughout my lifetime, politicians and pundits have constantly moaned about terrifying problems facing America. Yet our citizens now live an astonishing six times better than when I was born. The prophets of doom have overlooked the all-important factor that *is* certain: Human potential is far from exhausted, and the American system for unleashing that potential – a system that has worked wonders for over two centuries despite frequent interruptions for recessions and even a Civil War – remains alive and effective.

Governor Scott, I urge you to move boldly on the opportunities for jobs and a sound economic future for Florida that high speed rail provides. Any uncertainty in this major jobs initiative can be addressed by doing the tough work together, but we must secure these opportunities and a brighter economic future for our state.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
U.S. Representative
Florida – District 11