



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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April 30, 2019

The Honorable Robert Nichols
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068 – Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Chairman Nichols and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

I write today to express my opposition to Senate Bill 478 and Senate Bill 975. These bills will make it significantly more difficult to build the Texas Central “Bullet Train.” While SB 478 may seem reasonable on its face, a more thorough review reveals that it just adds another layer of unnecessary regulation. It does nothing but sow confusion and impede progress on a worthy project

The I-45 corridor between Houston and Dallas is one of the most heavily trafficked corridors in the state, and one of the most dangerous in the country. The Texas Central “Bullet Train” will make the trip between North Texas and Houston significantly faster and safer. The technology that will be used in this project — which is called Shinkansen — has a 52-year safety record that is the best in the world. SB 975, which mandates that “the various components of the Texas passenger rail network are compatible with more than one source of high-speed rolling stock...” Heavy freight trains are simply incompatible with light, high-speed passenger trains. It would compromise safety to use a lesser technology. This legislation sabotages the proposed “Shinkansen” technology before it can leave the gate.

The Texas Bullet Train will give Houston, North Texas and our entire state a competitive advantage over other states. No other state will be able to offer the same confluence of economic factors associated with this high-speed transportation amenity. It will create 10,000 jobs each year during construction and an estimated 1,000 new, highly-skilled jobs.

Texas Central is expected to add more than \$10 billion in direct investment, \$2.5 billion in tax revenues and have an economic impact of \$36 billion over ten years. It will also be environmentally friendly. The train is 6 times more efficient than traveling by car and emits about 1/12 the carbon of a commercial airliner. More than 60% of the route will be in the form of elevated viaducts, which will allow for free movement of animals, people and vehicles.

With a 90-minute trip time, it will be much faster than traveling by car, and significantly safer — the I-45 corridor is the second-deadliest highway in the country. This project will connect

approximately half the state's population. With all factors taken into account, every Texan wins with this plan. This legislation is an unfortunate attempt to derail progress toward our transportation future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping tail.

Sylvester Turner,
Mayor