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Congress of the United States
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Washington, DC 20515-1009

April 13, 2016

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx,

I am writing today on behalf of the City of Lula, Georgia. Lula, located in the 9th Congressional District of Georgia, is home to a bridge known as the Cobb Street Bridge or Cobb Street railroad overpass. The historic wooden bridge crosses over a Norfolk Southern railroad line and is an important connection point between two sides of the town. However, in October of 2015, the bridge was closed due to structural deficiencies. Since that time, the bridge has remained closed despite efforts by the City of Lula to have it reopened.

The Cobb Street Bridge is not only part of the town's heritage; it provides a key access point in the city, particularly for emergency vehicles. Aside from the bridge, the city has only one underpass and two rail grade crossings that connect the Hall County side of the city with the Banks County side.

Accordingly, city officials have pursued solutions to have the bridge reopened and have repeatedly been in contact with Norfolk Southern, which is responsible for maintenance of the bridge under a court order. It is my understanding that the company has instead proposed a cash payment to replace the bridge. The city, in turn, has said that "past experience in attempting to communicate with Norfolk Southern as to the Cobb Street Bridge Overpass has resulted in lengthy delays and a serious burden to the community" which they serve.

The city is in a difficult position as they are not legally responsible for repairs of the bridge, but the bridge serves a critical function to residents.

In the past, the city has worked through the Department of Transportation to obtain a schedule for bridge repairs and evaluating options to serve the community. It is my hope, on behalf of the City of Lula, that your agency could once again be of assistance to the city in evaluating current conditions and helping to find a solution that preserves this important structure.

The Cobb Street Bridge serves a transportation purpose for Lula, but it is also a part of the city's cultural fabric. To that end, I request that you make every effort to assist the city in finding a solution to reopen the bridge and ensure the bridge is maintained in its historic form.

I appreciate your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you have any questions. I look forward to your timely response and assistance.

Sincerely,



Congressman Doug Collins
Ninth Congressional District of Georgia

Cc:
The Honorable Sarah E. Feinberg
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration

The Honorable Milton Turner
Mayor
City of Lula, Georgia

Mr. James A. Squires
Chief Executive Officer
Norfolk Southern