

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 24, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Russell Senate Office Building 254
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Chair Cantwell,

To begin construction of a robust passenger rail network connecting the American Southeast and to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas pollution and fight climate change, I write to request a minimum of \$10 billion allocated for high-speed rail planning and construction in the upcoming reconciliation measure. Investment in high-speed passenger rail is vital to the State of Georgia and the construction of the long-planned Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor.

Georgia is known globally as a transportation and logistics hub. We host the country's busiest airport¹ and largest and fastest-growing container terminal.² But Georgia and the broader Southeast region lack an efficient passenger rail network.

The Federally-designated Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor has been planned by the Department of Transportation for more than two decades but is yet to receive the major Federal investment necessary to complete planning and begin construction.

As this Congress makes historic investments in America's infrastructure, we should allocate sufficient resources for high-speed rail necessary to advance the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor, a long-planned project of national significance necessary to connect the fast-growing American Southeast.

¹ <https://www.travelandleisure.com/airlines-airports/busiest-airport-in-the-world>

² <https://gaports.com/facilities/port-of-savannah/>

Our region’s major metropolitan areas— like Atlanta, Charlotte, Nashville, Savannah, and Charleston — are fast growing and home to some of our country's top universities, most productive companies, most vibrant cultural institutions, and most dynamic entrepreneurs. And the region’s small towns, rural communities, and farmers deserve the mobility and connectivity offered by a robust passenger rail network.

It’s time to connect the American Southeast — and to reduce devastating greenhouse gas pollution while we do it.

The transportation sector is the largest contributor to U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. According to the EPA, between 1990 and 2019, GHG emissions in the transportation sector increased more in absolute terms than any other sector. Electric high-speed rail reduces carbon emissions by up to 90 percent compared to alternative forms of travel.³

I strongly urge the Senate's proposal to include at least \$10 billion in dedicated funding for high-speed rail planning and construction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Ossoff", with a stylized, cursive script.

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator

³ <https://drawdown.org/solutions/high-speed-rail>