

March 23, 2018

Re: SouthCoast Rail

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to voice my concern and opposition to the proposed southcoast rail service. As a lifelong resident of New Bedford I feel that this service will not benefit the area and actually will do more harm than good.

My first concern would be the displacement of elderly and families who will not be able to afford the new property taxes. My understanding of the project is that property evaluations in the area could raise 100% to 200%. There are many families and elderly who will not be able to afford this new tax bill and will be forced to sell their property.

Secondly, while I understand the current project is controlled by MassDot it is my understanding that after the project is built this system would transfer to the MBTA System, or whatever third party company, to manage the system. The MBTA operates in a multi-million dollar deficit every year and also as a multi-billion dollar capital plan. How can we look to add on to this service when the current system is in such poor shape? In a recent Facebook Live session with Dr. Fox she was asked what the projected budget for the new service would be and what the projected revenue is for this project. She stated that they are just now starting to look at this. How can we spend 1 billion dollars on this project but not know how much it will cost to run? What State programs will have to be cut to fund for this project's operating expenses? How much will be cut from the state funds that currently come to the city to fund this system?

Finally, the projected 1 billion for phase 1 and another 2-3 billion for Phase 2 could be used to fix larger transportation issues in the area. Just to name a few we have the Fairhaven-New Bedford Bridge, 195 off ramp to Rt 18, King Highway Project, and the Tucker Road project. Not to mention the miles and miles of roadways that need to be repaved. These projects would service more people then this train will service. I understand these projects are in the works but I also always hear that funding is a problem. Well maybe we should spend the 3-4 billion on our current needs before we add on to a failing rail system.

In summary I urge you to not support this project until our current infrastructure, including the MBTA, is in better shape. We have lived without the rail service for many years and we will continue to do so in the future. We have rail stops within a 20 minute drive and have bus service to Boston now from our city. Adding to a failing system does not seem like the best idea at this time. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Dom Lee

New Bedford, MA