

JACK REED  
RHODE ISLAND  
COMMITTEES  
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ARMED SERVICES, RANKING MEMBER  
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INTELLIGENCE, Ex OFFICIO

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3903

received  
1/17/17 AAW

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<http://reed.senate.gov>

January 10, 2017

The Honorable Virginia Lee, President  
Town Council  
Town of Charlestown  
4540 South County Trail,  
Charlestown RI 02813

Thank you for organizing today's public meeting on the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA's) Northeast Corridor (NEC) Future initiative.

This is an important public forum, and although votes in Washington prevent me from attending, my staff will be in attendance. Additionally, I have asked that officials from Amtrak and RIDOT be on hand to hear the community's concerns.

By now, you should have also received the attached letter from the FRA, explaining the NEC Future process and its past outreach and engagement. I recognize that many of our constituents only recently learned about NEC Future. To further ensure that all voices are heard and considered, I have written to FRA Administrator Sarah Feinberg to request additional time for public comment.

As the FRA letter mentions, the broad recommendations outlined by FRA are "by no means final." The State of Rhode Island must be on board for any project in the state to move forward under NEC Future, and any project would be subject to more detailed environmental review and public comment. Moreover, as the Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Transportation, I will not support funding for any project that the State of Rhode Island does not back.

Again, I commend you for your leadership in organizing this evening's meeting, which is critical to building public awareness and engagement.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed  
United States Senator

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RHODE ISLAND

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January 10, 2017

The Honorable Sarah E. Feinberg, Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Feinberg:

Thank you for your letter regarding NEC Future, which the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) sent to the President of the Charlestown (Rhode Island) Town Council earlier today. I appreciate the clarification of both the FRA's outreach to date and the process going forward, including the prerequisite of state support for the construction of any new segment. Finally, I appreciate FRA's commitment for more in-depth conversations with the Town about NEC Future. As part of that continuing conversation, I ask that you extend the comment period on the Final EIS so that my constituents, some of whom have only recently learned about the NEC Future process, have sufficient time to share their concerns.

Thank you, again, for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Railroad Administration**  
One Bowling Green, Suite 429  
New York, NY 10004



January 10, 2017

Town of Charlestown  
Virginia Lee  
Council President  
4540 South County Trail  
Charlestown, RI 02813

**Re: NEC FUTURE Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Council President Lee:

I am following up on our letter to Charlestown, R.I. on December 16, 2016, which announced that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released the Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for NEC FUTURE, the FRA's comprehensive long-term plan for improvements to the Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail line from Washington, D.C., to Boston, MA.

In 2012, at the urging of Congress, all Northeast states and the FRA began working together to develop a vision that would help guide and coordinate planning and investments for the NEC. For more than four years, the FRA has worked closely with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, conducted outreach to elected officials and stakeholders, held public meetings in Rhode Island, and communicated directly with all local jurisdictions and Tribes potentially affected by proposals put forth in the Tier 1 Draft EIS and Tier 1 Final EIS (see enclosures). During the public comment period on the Tier 1 Draft EIS that spanned from November 13, 2015 to February 16, 2016, we heard from many Rhode Islanders about the need to maintain and improve the existing NEC, expand service in and through Providence, and increase reliability and frequency of service between New York and Boston. The FRA realizes these service improvements are critical to the regional economy.

The FRA understands that some in your community have expressed concerns regarding some of the recommendations put forth in the Final EIS, as well as opportunities for public involvement as this process moves forward. I want to assure you that the FRA has and will continue to engage with stakeholders and interested citizens as this multi-decade planning process advances in partnership with states and local communities.

Additionally, as thorough as this process has been to date, it is by no means final. The Preferred Alternative encompassed in the Final EIS is essentially the FRA's recommendation for improvements along the NEC including some in areas that may need additional study, which will be conducted in partnership with states and local communities. It is extremely important to remember that states, stakeholders, and the public will be very involved as this long-term, multi-decade planning process continues. No construction activities are imminent and no specific alignments have been chosen; the lines on a map depicting a potential new segment through Charlestown and Washington County are representative in nature. The location and construction type of any new segment would be determined in a Tier 2 project study, when Rhode Island, as the project proponent, would evaluate and identify the best alignment and design based on public input and impacts on resources.

Administrator Sarah Feinberg has asked that I connect with you and Town leadership for a more in-depth discussion about NEC FUTURE, potential impacts to Charlestown, and the next steps in this long-term planning process. With input from stakeholders and any feedback we receive on the Tier 1 Final EIS, the FRA will define a Selected Alternative in the record of decision in 2017. In addition, a Service Development Plan (SDP) will follow.

The FRA looks forward to working with you as this process moves forward, and we appreciate your responsible leadership and advocacy on behalf of Charlestown.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Reyes-Alicea". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea  
NEC FUTURE Program Manager

Enclosures



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Railroad Administration**  
One Bowling Green, Suite 429  
New York, NY 10004



November 10, 2015

Town of Charlestown  
Thomas Gentz  
Council President  
4540 South County Trail  
Charlestown, RI 02813

**Re: NEC FUTURE Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Thomas Gentz:

NEC FUTURE is the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) comprehensive plan for improvements to the Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail line from Washington, D.C., to Boston, Massachusetts. The plan will define a long-term vision and incremental approach for improving passenger rail service. As part of this effort, the FRA has prepared a Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 1 Draft EIS), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, and a Draft Programmatic Agreement, in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. The FRA is currently seeking public comments on these documents, and will be holding public hearings this winter in each state between Washington, D.C., and Massachusetts.

A priority for the FRA is the participation of the many NEC stakeholders, and in particular, the affected communities, in this historic decision-making process. The selection of a long-term vision and investment program for the NEC will have far-reaching effects on transportation in your community and the entire Northeastern U.S. I would like to invite you to learn more about NEC FUTURE. The enclosed brochure provides an overview of NEC FUTURE. More information, including the full text of the Tier 1 Draft EIS, detailed descriptions of the Tier 1 Draft EIS Action Alternatives, and a list of public hearing dates and locations, can be found on the website at [www.necfuture.com](http://www.necfuture.com).

Finally, I hope you will consider commenting on the Tier 1 Draft EIS by January 30, 2016. NEC FUTURE offers a historic opportunity to shape the future of passenger rail transportation in the Northeast, and input from all sectors of the public is critical to the FRA's decision-making process. We look forward to hearing from you and your constituents during the comment period. Meanwhile, if you have any questions about NEC FUTURE, please contact us at [info@necfuture.com](mailto:info@necfuture.com).

Sincerely,

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea  
NEC FUTURE Program Manager

Enclosure



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Railroad Administration**  
One Bowling Green, Suite 429  
New York, NY 10004



December 16, 2016

Town of Charlestown  
Thomas Gentz  
Council President  
4540 South County Trail  
Charlestown, RI 02813

**Re: NEC FUTURE Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Council President Gentz:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is pleased to announce the release of the Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 1 Final EIS) for NEC FUTURE, the FRA's comprehensive plan for improvements to the Northeast Corridor rail line from Washington, D.C., to Boston. The Tier 1 Final EIS is the next step in the NEPA process that will inform the FRA's selection of an alternative in the Record of Decision (ROD). Thank you for your involvement in reaching this milestone.

The Tier 1 Final EIS identifies and analyzes a Preferred Alternative for NEC FUTURE. The Preferred Alternative reflects the Tier 1 Draft EIS findings, public and stakeholder comments, and U.S. Department of Transportation policy. The Tier 1 Final EIS also includes responses to comments received during the public comment period (November 13, 2015 – February 16, 2016) and a revised Tier 1 Draft EIS based on comments received.

The NEC FUTURE Tier 1 Final EIS, including the Programmatic Agreement (under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) and associated documents, is available at [www.necfuture.com](http://www.necfuture.com). Information regarding the decision-making process, waiting period and how to provide feedback can also be found on the NEC FUTURE website.

I look forward to our continued coordination as the process moves forward. If you would like to receive a hard copy or a USB drive of the documents or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [info@necfuture.com](mailto:info@necfuture.com).

Sincerely

Rebecca Reyes-Alicea  
NEC FUTURE Program Manager, Northeast Corridor Joint Program Advisor

## NEC FUTURE – Rhode Island Outreach

Date	Action
8/22/2012	Scoping Meeting (Providence)
10/5/2012	Meeting with NEC States
2/22/2013	Meeting with NEC States
4/5/2013	Rhode Island Coordination Meeting
10/2/2013	CONEG/States Coordination Meeting
12/17/2013	RIDOT Meeting re: Alternatives Development
3/27/2014	Rhode Island All-Agency Update
10/14/2014	Economic Development Workshop - Providence/Boston invitees
11/12/2014	Open House Meeting (Providence)
8/4/2015	Economic Development Workshop - follow-up webinar
9/17/2015	Public webinar
11/10/2015	DEIS letters sent to Charlestown Council President. The DEIS Highlights brochure was enclosed.
11/13/2015	Legal notice for the DEIS in the <i>Providence Journal</i>
11/13/2015	Public Comment Period opens
12/06/2015	Display ad in the <i>Providence Journal</i> to advertise the DEIS and the public hearing.
12/17/2015	DEIS Public Hearing (Providence)
2/16/2016	Public Comment Period closes
12/16/2016	FEIS letters sent to Charlestown Council President. The FEIS Highlights brochure was enclosed.