



For Immediate Release
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Medical Providers and First Responders Join Growing Coalition Opposing All Aboard Florida

Jupiter, FL –Citing public safety concerns and possible limits on access to local hospitals, area leaders, medical providers and first responders today joined members of [Citizens Against Rail Expansion in Florida](#) (CARE FL) to express concerns about passenger and freight rail expansion in South Florida and the Treasure Coast. CARE supporters, which include operators of ambulances, fire trucks and police vehicles, are most immediately concerned about All Aboard Florida (AAF), which is seeking to build high-speed rail between Orlando and Miami.

John Couris, president and CEO of the Jupiter Medical Center, one of the oldest and most respected medical centers in South Florida, used plain language to describe his growing concerns:

“In a medical emergency, the time it takes to get to a hospital can be the difference between life and death,” said Couris. “I urge All Aboard Florida to strongly reconsider the current plan for expansion. The Medical Center supports the growth of transportation in the State of Florida. However, I would encourage All Aboard Florida to go about this in a methodical and thoughtful manner, not at the expense of patient safety.”

If train crossings are blocked when a medical emergency occurs, ambulance drivers will have two choices: wait in line with other vehicles until the train has passed and the crossing is clear, or figure out an alternative (longer) path to the hospital. In both scenarios, he noted, ailing patients will be at the mercy of the clock.

Brent Hanlon, CARE FL Steering Committee Member said ambulance drivers, who already have to cope with existing trains, draw bridges and other realities of life in South Florida, should not be subjected to the additional challenges that

AAF will create.

“Seconds count,” said Hanlon, who is also General Manager of Loblolly. “Efforts to expand All Aboard Florida to our region threaten to seriously jeopardize the ability of public safety professionals to carry out life-saving tasks.”

He also added, “Any plans to expand rail through All Aboard Florida must consider the needs of our communities, where our hospitals and network of public safety personnel play an importing role in saving lives.”

In July 2014, CARE FL’s members sent letters of concern to [Governor Rick Scott](#) and to Florida Department of Transportation [Secretary Ananth Prasad](#) outlining the challenges communities along the proposed AAF route would face stemming from the increase in both the number and the length of freight trains passing through communities each day, as well as the frequency of the proposed high-speed passenger trains.

In addition to the first responder access issues, the letter also highlighted pedestrian and motorist safety concerns at grade crossings, environmental issues, disruption of maritime traffic and commerce, decreased property values and increased noise, that overall will degrade the quality of life currently enjoyed by residents of the communities along the AAF proposed route.

Today’s news conference, which was held at the Jupiter Medical Center, included Florida Congressman Patrick Murphy, Tequesta Mayor Abby Brennan, representatives from the medical community, law enforcement, and local government. Each provided an opinion, and perspective, on the negative impact All Aboard Florida will have on the region’s safety and quality of life.

About CARE FL

CARE FL is a coalition created by a group of concerned community leaders, organizations, and neighbors in South Florida and the Treasure Coast. Our group continues to grow. We share a common goal: protecting the safety, welfare, and way of life for the families, businesses, and retirees who live in and around our communities. For more information about CARE FL, please visit us online at www.saveourfl.com.

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Here is what they are saying:

"I firmly believe that the All Aboard Florida project will have a negative impact on our communities' efforts to address the public safety needs of our residents. I have heard from many first responders and they all express the same concerns about how the additional trains will impact police and fire rescue personnel by hindering their ability to react, respond and render assistance at times when every second counts."

~Tequesta Mayor Abby Brennan

"As I learned after suffering a stroke earlier this year, nothing should come between a patient and their ability to make it to a hospital. Expanding rail traffic near our hospitals will only create more barriers between first responders and emergency rooms, when every second counts and they are trying to save lives."

~Rep. MaryLynn Magar - District 82, Tequesta

"One of my primary concerns with All Aboard Florida is the risk it poses to public safety -- and that includes the potentially lengthy wait times ambulances and first responders may endure due to increased rail traffic."

~Congressman Patrick Murphy - 18th District