



Office of the
**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR**

Jason E. Brown, County Administrator
Michael C. Zito, Assistant County Administrator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Brian Sullivan
Legislative Affairs & Communications Manager

DATE: August 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of the Pedestrian Safety Study Act Introduced by
Congressmen Posey and Mast

BACKGROUND

All Aboard Florida/Brightline/Virgin Trains (“Brightline”) intends to operate a higher speed passenger rail system from Miami to Orlando International Airport by way of the Florida East Coast Railway corridor. The Brightline higher speed passenger rail system will bring multiple passenger trains through populated areas of Indian River County, including Vero Beach, Sebastian, and the communities of Gifford, Wabsasso, and Winter Beach, each day, at maximum speed of 110 miles per hour.

Indian River County has significant safety concerns about Brightline trains traversing at such high speeds along an open railroad corridor and across 31 highway-railroad grade crossings. Between 2018 and 2020, there have been 50 pedestrian deaths and 74 total deaths involving all rail operations on the shared Florida East Coast Railway corridor. During the same timeframe, there have been 25 pedestrian deaths and 43 total deaths on the corridor involving only Brightline higher-speed passenger rail operations.

In July of 2020, United States Congressmen Bill Posey (R-FL) and Brian Mast (R-FL) introduced the *Pedestrian Safety Study Act* (“the Act”). The Act directs the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to study motorist and pedestrian safety along the proposed Brightline corridor. If passed by the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate and signed into law by the President, the Act would require the FRA and

FHWA to complete the study and provide a report to the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) within two years.

In July of 2020, during consideration of House Resolution 76167, the Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Act, Congressmen Posey and Mast offered an amendment to include the Act within the larger piece of legislation. The Act was amended onto House Resolution 76167 with bipartisan support and House Resolution 76167 ultimately passed the United States House of Representatives.

At this time, the United States Senate has neither taken up House Resolution 76167 or its own version of a Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Act.

FUNDING

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

County staff recommends the Board of County Commissioners of Indian River County, Florida pass a Resolution in support of the Posey-Mast *Pedestrian Safety Study Act* and respectfully request United States Senators Rubio and Scott to include the *Pedestrian Safety Study Act* within any forthcoming appropriations legislation which may be considered by the United States Senate.