



Florida Department of Transportation

CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

STEPHANIE C. KOPELOUSOS
SECRETARY

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CONTACT: Dick Kane
850-414-4595

GOVERNOR CRIST APPLAUDS FEDERAL APPROVAL FOR FLORIDA HIGH SPEED RAIL PROJECT

- First Record of Decision issued for a major high speed rail project -

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today applauded the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for issuing a final Record of Decision for the Orlando-Tampa segment of Florida’s high speed rail program.

“Florida has worked hard to achieve this milestone,” said Governor Crist. “We now have the green light to move forward quickly to build America’s first true high speed rail system. This effort is already creating new jobs for Floridians and it will create many more in the next two years.”

In issuing this Record of Decision, the FRA is allowing the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to begin the design, land acquisition and construction of the Orlando-Tampa project. This announcement represents the first time a Record of Decision has been issued for a major high speed rail project in the country.

“We thank Governor Crist for leading the charge, along with our congressional and legislative leadership, for the tremendous support they have shown to move this project forward,” said FDOT Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos. “We also thank our federal partners for working with us to fund the next phase of project work.”

The next phase includes taking the Orlando-Tampa segment to 30 percent design, updating ridership projections, selected right-of-way purchases, preliminary station design and getting bids ready for construction of the system. The process will culminate in a competition in which private companies will bid for the right to build, operate and maintain the system.

In the meantime, work has already begun on the project. Crews have started laying out markers for aerial surveys done by both plane and helicopter. Ground crews are surveying bridges and other sight-obstructed areas that cannot be seen from the sky. This preliminary work is being done by Florida-based professional firms including Aerial Cartographics of America Inc., Geodata Consultants Inc. and Mehta Engineering.

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“Last year we had to lay off some experienced people because of the economic downturn. The high speed rail project has allowed us to bring them back and hire more people,” said Jim Humphrey, president of Aerial Cartographics of America. “We are now working up to seven days a week and may have to do more hiring to meet the project goals.”

For more information, please visit www.floridahighspeedrail.org.

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