



Ohio Rail Development Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Jim Seney, Director

FROM: Lou Jannazo, Chief of Planning *LJ*

SUBJECT: Panhandle Sale-Input: COTA

DATE: November 5, 2002

Yesterday, I talked to Mike Bradley of the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) about the possible sale of the Panhandle to a private railroad. In previous telephone conversations, I had offered to go to COTA offices to gather input from whomever at COTA might want to provide it. Mr. Bradley stated that the COTA position on the issue was straightforward and it did not require a formal meeting to convey it to ORDC.

Mr. Bradley stated that whether or not ORDC held formal, public hearings was not an issue with COTA. He added that from his experience in the public sector, it sounded like a good idea to conduct public hearings.

Mr. Bradley expressed that keeping the Panhandle line open to intercity passenger and commuter services was the most important consideration for COTA. He expressed that continued State ownership of the line would be the preferred method to accomplish this end, but added that other methods could be employed.

One of the methods Mr. Bradley suggested would be to negotiate passenger rights up front and include them as part of whatever Purchase & Sale Agreement (P&SA) documents ORDC would use. He recognized that this approach could be complicated by the uncertainties of what future passenger services might look like, what entities might be operating them, and the future level of freight traffic on the Panhandle.

An alternative method Mr. Bradley mentioned, would be for the P&SA documents to include less specific and detailed rights for future passenger operations over the Panhandle, but to include a mediation process for future passenger issues. He stated that the problem with working with freight railroads on passenger issues was determining what is "reasonable" from both sides of the issue. He suggested that a good mediation process built into the P&SA documents would enable a third party to hear both sides and recommend solutions which both freight and passenger services would find acceptable.

lj27/COTAPanhandleInput