

Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce  
1321 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brookings, SD 57006



March 5, 2024

Senator John Thune, United States Senate  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune,

We hope this letter finds you well, and in high spirits as you serve our great state.

The Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce and its Board of Directors are writing to you today to express our strong support for the Amtrak project, particularly the route from Denver to Minneapolis/St. Paul with passages through Rapid City and Sioux Falls. This project holds immense promise for economic development and improved access for underserved populations across South Dakota.

The introduction of an Amtrak route connecting major cities such as Denver, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls would undoubtedly stimulate economic growth and opportunity along its path. Improved transportation infrastructure is a cornerstone of economic development, enabling businesses to access new markets, facilitate tourism, and attract investment. This route has the potential to foster regional cooperation and collaboration, spurring job creation and enhancing the overall competitiveness of our state.

Furthermore, the benefits of the proposed Amtrak route extend beyond economic development to encompass increased access for underserved populations. Reliable and affordable transportation options are essential for connecting communities and ensuring equitable opportunities for all residents. By expanding rail service to areas such as Rapid City and Sioux Falls, where transportation options can be very limited, we can enhance mobility and provide greater access to education, employment, and healthcare services.

While we wholeheartedly support the proposed route through Rapid City and Sioux Falls, we also wish to highlight the importance of including Brookings in this transportation network. As home to South Dakota's only land grant university and a distinguished D1 institution with aspirations for R1 status, Brookings plays a pivotal role in driving innovation, research, and economic development in our state. Including Brookings in the Amtrak route would not only benefit our local economy but also facilitate greater connectivity for students, faculty, and researchers, enhancing collaboration and knowledge exchange across South Dakota.

**We urge you to champion the proposed Amtrak route from Denver to Minneapolis/St. Paul, with passages through Rapid City and Sioux Falls**, while also considering the inclusion of Brookings. By investing in this critical transportation infrastructure, we can unleash the full potential of South Dakota's economy, improve access for underserved populations, and foster a more connected and prosperous future for all residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Doom, President & CEO  
Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce