



Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of the Secretary
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764
Telephone 217/782-5597

July 27, 2001

Ms. Delores C. Pino, Esq.

Dear Ms. Pino:

Thank you for your recent e-mail to Governor George H. Ryan regarding high-speed rail and this region's air capacity problem. Governor Ryan has asked us to respond on his behalf.

We believe high-speed rail provides attractive alternatives for travelers. That is why Governor Ryan's Illinois FIRST Program provided \$70 million to develop high-speed rail in the Chicago-St. Louis corridor. However, studies have also shown that we must provide increased air capacity, if we are to meet the state's travel demands. That is why Governor Ryan supports the construction of the South Suburban Airport (SSA) in eastern Will County.

During the planning and construction phases of SSA, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has worked diligently to address the very concerns you raise. SSA has been designed to keep all objectionable noise and air quality issues within the boundary of the airport. IDOT has worked hand in hand with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the state and federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). SSA will not only be a premier airport from an aviation standpoint, but also environmentally.

In regards to your comments regarding a high-speed rail system, Illinois, as a result of Governor George Ryan's Illinois FIRST Infrastructure Program, is working to develop a high-speed rail corridor between Chicago and St. Louis. Within 2 years we expect that nearly 120 miles of this 2-mile corridor will be upgraded for 110-mile-per-hour train service operating with new equipment. We, along with other potential high-speed rail programs throughout the country, have found that the incremental approach to developing a high-speed rail system has the best potential to cover its operating cost from train-generated revenues.

Illinois is also part of a nine-state effort called the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative that has been studying the concept of linking major urban areas in the midwest via high-speed trains operating at 110-miles per hour. The planned corridors would be on lines currently owned by freight railroads and would link Chicago with major metropolitan areas such as Detroit, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Cleveland just to name a few. As you correctly point out, high-speed rail is already utilized in Europe.

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Recently, legislation was introduced in both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives that would provide Amtrak \$12 billion in federal bond funds to develop high-speed rail corridors throughout the country. Illinois supports this legislation providing there are caps limiting the amount that can be used for any single corridor.

Once again, thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk Brown", written over a horizontal line.

Kirk Brown
Secretary

cc: Governor George H. Ryan