



*Inland Empire Rail Transit
Association
P. O. Box 8055*

Dear Senator Brown

The leadership of The Inland Empire Rail Transit Association has been involved in the conceptual development and support for light rail in the Spokane region for, in some cases, as much as a dozen years or more. Early in our process, it became clear to us that while key factors indicate that the project is viable and it is wise to proceed, the significant barriers to progress have come in the form of governmental congestion and stagnation. This reality is not unique to our locale. It was often repeated in projects that we studied. Some governance structures had to change or new ones were created before a project could advance.

We cite the lack of a single body with regional vision and passion that connects the significance of land use AND transportation planning to economic viability. We decry the fact that structures as they now exist tend to foster, rather than dilute, jurisdictional turf battles and parochial thinking.

We are intrigued by the study done for the multi-county Puget Sound region which resulted in some recommendations that make sense to us. That report suggests that a regional board be elected to do regional land use and transportation planning. This gives one hope that members who serve would have an interest in the function and not participate simply because they drew the short straw in their jurisdictions.

Key to the board makeup (a provision that we have discussed and favor) is the prohibition of currently elected officials serving while still in office. Clearly the inability to exchange the jurisdictional hat for the regional hat is a common problem. We have wondered if this model is one that could be applied to a region such as ours with connectivity to Kootenai County, which has recently become a metropolitan planning organization (MPO).

We heartily endorse the concept that it takes a different governance structure to advance a regional project such as light rail and offer our support.

K.C. Traver, President
The Inland Empire Rail Transit Association

cc: Senator Chris Marr
Senator Bob McCaslin
Representative Timm Ormsby
Representative Alex Wood
Lauri Dolan, Office of the Governor
Sheila Collins, Office of the Governor

