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**For immediate release:
October 1, 2009**

**Contact:
Sally Patrenos
(850)414-4105**

Florida Transportation Commission Urges Support for Federal Funding for High Speed Rail

The Florida Transportation Commission has unanimously passed a resolution in support of the efforts by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to secure federal funding for high speed rail under the High Speed Passenger Rail Program within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), better known as the federal stimulus program. The FDOT submitted a pre-application to the Federal Railroad Administration requesting \$2.5 billion of the \$8 billion available for high-speed rail projects. Should Florida's application be approved, construction on the Tampa to Orlando section could be under construction by 2011.

The Commission has long supported the Department's efforts to develop a high-speed rail system that would create the backbone for a multi-modal transportation system that efficiently moves people and goods, supports economic growth, and improves the environment and quality of life for all Floridians. Like many other states, Florida's transportation infrastructure is at a critical crossroads as a result of the culmination of increasing demand with decreasing revenue options.

Commission Chairman Marcos Marchena states that Florida must take advantage of every valid opportunity to invest in our state's current and future mobility needs. Over 60 letters and resolutions of support have been submitted by local governments, the business sector—including Disney—cities, counties, metropolitan and regional planning agencies, and economic development groups, with more anticipated.

FDOT has taken an aggressive posture in striving to secure new funding, to advance projects and to develop an efficient multi-modal transportation system. The Florida Transportation Commission, by resolution, has encouraged Florida's elected leadership and citizenry to also join in this effort to bring new travel choices to Florida's residents, businesses and visitors.