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OEC urges NO vote on Issue 9

A vote for Issue 9 is a vote to derail Cincinnati's link with Dayton, Columbus, Cleveland, and the nation on 3C train

(Columbus, OH)—The Ohio Environmental Council today announced its opposition to Cincinnati Issue 9.

The OEC believes Issue 9 has the potential to derail a station stop in Cincinnati along the proposed 3C corridor, linking Cincinnati with daily train service to Dayton, Columbus, and Cleveland.

As worded, Issue 9 would prohibit the city from spending any monies for right-of-way acquisition or construction of improvements for passenger rail transportation within the city limits without first securing approval of the voters.

Issue 9 is promoted as a referendum on a local streetcar proposal, but its wording is so broad that it could be applied to any passenger rail project involving Cincinnati, including the 3C train proposal. Cincinnati voters will vote Tuesday on Issue 9.

“Issue 9 will put a big red stop signal at the city limits of Cincinnati along the 3C rail corridor. It could totally derail the 3C train from reaching Cincinnati and prevent it from ever becoming anything more than a 2C train. If that happens, Cincinnati will miss out on the commerce, convenience, and connection that arrives with daily passenger rail service,” said Coby Williams, Legislative and Public Affairs Associate for the OEC and a native of Cincinnati.

Earlier this month, the Ohio Department of Transportation submitted an application for \$564 million in federal stimulus funds for the Ohio 3C “Quick Start” Passenger Rail Plan. If approved by federal transportation agencies, Ohio plans to make track improvements and acquire train cars and engines to restore daily passenger service along the 3C corridor.

According to Ohio transportation officials, the 3C corridor is one of the most populous corridors in the country not served by passenger trains; more than 6 million people live along the 3C corridor. An Amtrak study released in September verified there is pent up demand for passenger service in Ohio, projecting nearly half a million riders a year along the 3C corridor.

The OEC expects that individual cities will be asked to contribute to the 3C corridor, helping acquire right of way and helping construct or improve new or existing stations. Under Issue 9's wording, Cincinnati would be prohibited from making such contributions, unless voters expressly approved them. This could delay or even derail a station stop in Cincinnati.

State officials plan start-up, 79-MPH service along the 3C corridor as a prelude to 115 MPH high-speed train service. The 3C corridor is part of the federally designated, high-speed Chicago Hub Network, connecting Cincinnati with Dayton, Columbus, and Cleveland and with other Midwest cities. Nearby connections are envisioned to include Indianapolis, Louisville, Toledo, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and Detroit.

“The ultimate plan for the 3C corridor is for 115-MPH trains whisking travelers in and out of Cincinnati to points north, south, east, and west. The people of Cincinnati have a clear choice: Do they want to get on board the move to safe, comfortable, convenient train travel to other parts of the state and beyond, or do they want to slap a ‘go slow’ order on our city. We hope Cincinnatians will cast a vote for progress and vote no on Issue 9,” said Williams.

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The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is Ohio's leading advocate for fresh air, clean water, and sustainable land use. The OEC has a 40-year history of innovation, pragmatism, and success. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC secures a healthier environment for Ohio's families and communities. For more information, visit www.theOEC.org.