

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Peter D. O'Bryan
Chairman
District 4

Wesley S. Davis
Vice Chairman
District 1

Joseph E. Flescher
District 2

Tim Zorc
District 3

Bob Solari
District 5

September 30, 2014

Russell Roberts, Vice President
Florida East Coast Industries
8427 South Park Circle, Suite 140
Orlando, FL 32819

Dear Rusty,

It was an interesting phone conversation we had last Friday. It is not every day both sides of a conversation end a call as baffled as we both were. Since the call, I have spent a fair amount of time trying to figure out both why you were baffled and how you could be the least bit offended by anything I have said. My conclusion, which I am not saying is correct but is the best I can do at this time, is to simply suggest you are locked into your opinion and views and the opinions and views I hold are simply foreign to you. Coming away from our conversation, I felt nearly exactly as I did about two and a half years ago after I finished a long conversation with a convinced progressive about liberty, he simply could not comprehend any of the concepts I was trying to articulate. Obviously, I failed then and I failed again Friday when talking to you. I have decided, however to give it one more shot.

I will begin with a quote from Teddy Roosevelt in 1907 I used at the Taxpayers' Association luncheon: "Our laws have failed in enforcing the performance of duty by the man of property toward the man who works for him, by the corporation toward the investor, the wage earner and the general public."

All Aboard Florida (AAF) came into our community promoting a venture it said was a private project, on private property that was to be privately funded. Given this, AAF's position has been the project is basically none of anybody else's business. This is not just my view of AAF; it is an attitude AAF has projected into the communities along the Treasure Coast. It is a retrograde position, a position no longer acceptable in America society.

It was the attitude the Robber Barons had when they ruled America's Gilded Age and when the "laissez faire" business philosophy was dominant in American business. Sometimes I feel as if all involved with the AAF passenger rail project have missed the 100 years since Roosevelt's quote.

1801 27th Street, Building A
Vero Beach, FL 32960
(772) 226-1490

Russell Roberts, Vice President
September 30, 2014
Page Two

But, as I noted at the Taxpayers' lunch, the next 100 years did happen. The "laissez faire" philosophy of the Robber Barons no longer holds. This is not just my view, or Roosevelt's view; it is the view of the Supreme Court of the United States. As one authority discussing the Supreme Court's decisions during Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal days has written:

The Court has discarded the idea that the laissez -faire, noninterventionist conception of governmental action offers a feasible approach to the problem of adopting the Constitution to the needs of the Twentieth Century. Rendered into the idiom of American constitutional law, this means that *the National Government is entitled to employ any and all of its powers to forward any and all of the objectives of good government.* (Italics in the original)

This is related to my saying "Greed is Good". I believe greed can be good, that it can be a motivator. It can help build bigger companies. But it cannot be the only object of an activity; it cannot be the end, the '*telos*'. To me, this is the essence of what the Fortress Investment Group with its passenger rail project does not understand. It does not understand that the end of, the '*telos*' of, a community is not wealth, it is good order, '*eunomia*'.

This was understood by Solon when the Athenians brought him in to restore '*eunomia*', it was understood by both Roosevelts as they dealt with the problems brought by the "laissez faire" business philosophy, and it is understood by the members of the communities along the Treasure Coast.

Until Fortress and its associated companies fully grasp and internalize this, as long as it remains the enemy of good order in our communities, the AAF passenger rail project will not be welcome along the Treasure Coast.

A final thought. Politically, I consider myself to be a moderate Republican. Progressives in the community consider me a liberty-loving conservative. If you are baffled by my view of the AAF passenger rail project, consider for a moment how baffled the 90 percent of the Treasure Coast residents, who are to my political left, must be by yours.

Sincerely,



Bob Solari
District 5

BS:mlp

cc: Governor Rick Scott
Senator Joe Negron
Representative Debbie Mayfield
Mr. Rich Campbell