

October 10, 2023

HOPE for Prisoners
Attn: Interim Finance Committee Members
333 N. Rancho Drive, Second Floor
Las Vegas, Nevada 89106

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Sarah Watterson, President of Brightline West. It is my honor to share my support with the Interim Finance Committee today as it pertains to the HOPE for Prisoners (HFP) and Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) collaboration to launch the Vocational Village program at Southern Desert Correctional Center here in Nevada.

Brightline West will connect Las Vegas and Southern California with the first true high-speed passenger rail system in the nation. This 218-mile, all-electric high-speed rail service will include a flagship station in Las Vegas, with additional stations in Apple Valley, Hesperia, and Rancho Cucamonga. At speeds of 186+ miles per hour, trains will take passengers from Las Vegas to Rancho Cucamonga in just 2 hours and 10 minutes, twice as fast as the normal drive time. The Rancho Cucamonga Station will connect to Southern California's regional Metrolink service, allowing for seamless connectivity into downtown Los Angeles and beyond.

HOPE for Prisoners has been a reputable organization in the Las Vegas community for many years in assisting formerly incarcerated individuals to overcome barriers and successfully reenter our community. I believe that the enhanced and expanded vocational training and supportive services that will be delivered by HFP and their partners through Vocational Village will make an impact on recidivism in Southern Nevada. Individuals released from incarceration face unique and challenging barriers that, when left unaddressed, can lead to a return to the prison system. The goal in establishing Vocational Village is to address and mitigate these challenges prior to individuals being released into the community, giving each person a greater chance of building a life and a lifestyle that does not lead them back to incarceration.

Selected industries for training at Vocational Village are in high-demand and Brightline West is among the many employers who are eager to offer job opportunities for HFP clients who have completed the Vocational Village programming prior to their release. Brightline West will offer sustainable wage job opportunities that directly relate to the vocational training offered through Vocational Village.

In partnership with Southern Nevada and California Building Trades, we are committing our contractors to enter into project labor agreements to support over 10,000 direct field jobs during construction. Inclusive of jobs that go into materials production, transportation, and other key elements to constructing the system, Brightline West will support more than 35,000 jobs across the construction period. At operations, Brightline West is expected to support over 1,000 permanent jobs, about 900 of those being union roles.

The HFP program has been recognized nationally for its success in helping remove barriers to reentry while reducing recidivism in Las Vegas and is widely supported throughout the region. Brightline West is a proud supporter of HFP, and we look forward to hiring the skilled and work-ready employees from Vocational Village who will undoubtedly make a positive impact to our company as we bring high-speed rail to the Southwest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Swatterson".

Sarah Watterson
President, Brightline West