

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

November 12, 2019

Sir Richard Branson
Chairman
Virgin Group PLC
120 Campden Hill Road
London, United Kingdom W8 7AR

Dear Sir Richard,

I recently met with your team from Virgin Hyperloop One that is working to build the certification center and test facility for your company's hyperloop technology in the United States. I came away from the meeting convinced that this is a giant leap forward into the future of transportation, an engine that will change the way we travel and transform the national landscape. I am just as convinced that my state of West Virginia is the partner you are seeking to make this a reality.

You have set forth an aggressive schedule for construction of the test site and certification, and I strongly believe that West Virginia can move Virgin Hyperloop One through complete testing to full operational capability more efficiently than anywhere else. Our state has a track record of partnering with companies long after the initial investment to ensure that they not only grow but thrive. West Virginia has built a relationship with innovative countries like Japan and welcomed companies with a new vision for the future of transportation like Toyota and Hino Motors. Since arriving, they have grown from a handful of employees to thousands today, bringing in billions in investment over that time. More recently, Procter & Gamble has invested more than \$1 billion to build its flagship manufacturing facility in the state.

These companies recognize West Virginia's location at the midpoint of the Eastern Seaboard. Within 500 miles of 50% of the U.S. population, West Virginia has convenient access to major population centers such as DC, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Columbus, and Cincinnati, as well as major interstates like I-79, I-81, I-70, and I-64. Federal facilities such as the NASA IV&V Center, FBI CJIS Division, and NOAA Environmental Security Computing Center; aerospace manufacturers like Lockheed Martin, Pratt & Whitney, and Boeing; and tech companies like IBM, Leidos, and Infor have all taken advantage of West Virginia's central location and low workforce and overhead costs to save money while creating a sophisticated workforce from world-class researchers to experienced manufacturing professionals. Finally, as the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, I can say unequivocally that our state is gifted with abundant, affordable, and reliable energy that is critical for the hyperloop to function. More than that, we have a strong energy workforce driven by excellent universities such as West Virginia University and Marshall University, as well as the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown. With their great work and forward

thinking, West Virginia is ready to be on the cutting edge of innovation and advanced manufacturing.

I firmly believe that West Virginians will work harder than anyone else to ensure your technology for the future transportation system of America thrives. I won't shy away from the problems that Appalachia faces today, which are similar to many areas in your native U.K. But these problems can be overcome, and I believe that the right kind of vision – one between Hyperloop One and the leaders of our state – can bring growth and prosperity. West Virginia helped build America once before, and with this technology, it could do so again.

As the Senior Senator for West Virginia, I am committed to working with you to make that a reality. That's why I would like to invite you and your leadership team to visit our state and see just how ready it is to partner with Virgin Hyperloop One. I can't wait to show you just what my state can offer.

With warmest regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

CC: Jay Walder
Josh Giegel