



The Port of
LONG BEACH

June 25, 2009

Mr. Joseph P. Clary
Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Public & Intermodal Transportation
J.R. Thompson Center, Suite 6-600
100 West Randolph
Chicago, IL 60601

RE: Letter of Support for the CREATE Project

Dear Mr. Clary:

I am writing to express the support of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE). This program is the first-of-its-kind partnership between the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, the Association of American Railroads and the U.S. Department of Transportation. A project of regional and national significance, CREATE includes 78 critically needed rail and highway infrastructure improvements in Northeast Illinois. CREATE will increase efficiency of freight and passenger rail service throughout the nation and the region.

About 50% of the cargo moved through the Port of Long Beach is transported by rail to inland points, including Chicago and efficient rail operations in Chicago is critical to the port's success.

Due to the manner in which train tracks currently intersect with each other and with roads, and because the regional freight railroads defer to Amtrak and Metra in track utilization, it can now take up to 48 hours for freight trains to pass through the Chicago region. Delays in rail freight, including at grade crossings, threaten the economic vitality of the nation and the region, lead to increased traffic congestion on roadways, generate unnecessary levels of air pollution, raise safety concerns, and adversely affect the reliability and speed of rail passenger service.

With funding from the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation's major freight railroads, CREATE will alleviate these problems. Furthermore, improvements made in Chicago will have definite benefit on cargo that flows through the Port of Long Beach. Therefore, we are pleased to provide this support letter of the CREATE project.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Steinke
Executive Director