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December 6, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application to the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. This funding will support the Rock Island Connection Project (P2), a critical component of CREATE.

Project P2 involves constructing a flyover bridge between Belt Junction and Metra's Rock Island District (RID) line. This will allow Metra's SouthWest Service (SWS) trains to shift to the RID line, reducing congestion at Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains intersect daily. Additionally, commuter trains will terminate at LaSalle Street Station instead of Chicago Union Station (CUS), cutting travel times and freeing capacity for Amtrak's intercity passenger service.

Project P2 is a cornerstone of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP), a series of transformative upgrades within CREATE. The first two CIP components (P3 and GS19) are on track for completion in 2026, supported by a 2018 INFRA grant. Subsequent phases, including Project P2 and EW2, are essential to realizing the full benefits of this initiative.

Beyond operational improvements, Project P2 enhances community quality of life through safety, mobility, and workforce investments. Cleaner air, reduced delays, and improved development opportunities will bolster neighboring communities, while national supply chain efficiencies will benefit the broader economy.

For these reasons, I ask that you give this application all appropriate consideration. If you have any questions, please contact my Grants Specialist, Glennita Williams, at (708) 679-0078 or via email at Glennita.Williams@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress