



February 6, 2026

The Honorable. David A. Fink  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Illinois Department of Transportation's National Railroad Partnership Program / Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Grant Program Application (the Grant Application)

Dear Administrator Fink:

This letter shall serve as confirmation of our funding commitment for matching funds in support of the Illinois Department of Transportation's application for funding through the Grant Application. IDOT's Grant Application is submitted on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program and its public and private partners for the Rock Island Connection project (P2).

In support of this application and the request for \$383,976,978 in federal participation via NRP-FSP funds, the CREATE public and private partners hereby commit to collectively contribute \$95,994,245 in matching funds (public and private funding sources) for P2's estimated construction cost.

The grant and match funding are needed to advance CREATE's Rock Island Connection project (P2), the next phase of the larger 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project, that will construct a flyover bridge eliminating a major chokepoint and conflicts between freight and passenger trains. P2 directly aligns with the goals of the National Railroad Partnership Program by improving reliability, travel times, and safety for both passenger and freight trains in the country's most congested rail terminal. P2 is necessary to fully realize the delay reductions for freight rail users at Belt Junction once passenger trains are separated from freight traffic. With P2 a flyover bridge over freight rail infrastructure will be constructed between Belt Junction and Metra's Rock Island District (RID) line. By eliminating a major chokepoint and conflicts between freight and passenger trains P2 will reduce travel times, enhance safety, and improve reliability. P2 will also reroute passenger trains that serve approximately 4,000 weekday commuters from Chicago Union Station (CUS) to LaSalle Street Station.

The P2 project advances the CREATE Program's overarching goals to increase efficiency, capacity, and safety for reliable commuter, intercity passenger and freight rail throughout the Chicago region. P2 strengthens Chicago's position as the nation's premier freight hub, which handles nearly half of all intermodal containers and one-third of U.S. carload freight. By constructing a flyover bridge to eliminate bottlenecks, increase capacity, improve safety and reliability, P2 will deliver measurable benefits to freight movement and passenger service alike. This investment is not merely an infrastructure upgrade – it is pivotal step toward enhancing supply chain resilience and driving economic growth nationwide.

CREATE is a public-private partnership that includes the nation's rail industry and levels of state and local government. The CREATE partners through continued public and private collaboration aim to build on prior successes by continuing to deliver complex capital infrastructure projects such as P2. As a strong public-private partnership we can successfully deliver this project as set forth in the Grant Application.

Sincerely,



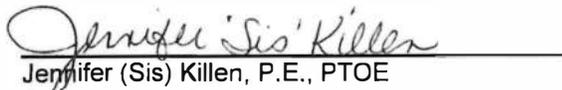
Gia Biagi  
Secretary  
Illinois Department of Transportation



Ian Jefferies  
President and CEO  
Association of American Railroads



Craig Turner  
Acting Commissioner  
Chicago Department of Transportation



Jennifer (Sis) Killen, P.E., PTOE  
Superintendent  
Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways



Jim Derwinski  
CEO/Executive Director  
Metra



Roger Harris  
President  
Amtrak



January 14, 2026

The Honorable David Fink  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: Support for CREATE's 75<sup>th</sup> Street CIP: Rock Island Connection P2 Project**

Dear Administrator Fink:

Metra is pleased to provide this letter of support and confirmation of our \$30,000,000 financial match for Illinois DOT's **CREATE 75th Street CIP: Rock Island Connection P2** (P2 Project) application to FRA's FY2024-2025 National Railroad Partnership (NRP) Program.

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) is a public-private partnership founded in 2003 by the public agencies of Amtrak, IDOT, Metra, Cook County, and the City of Chicago, five of the nation's six Class I freight railroads, and several short line railroads in the region. The partnership grew out of a Federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) task force that was formed in response to the growing urgency around the Chicago region's freight and passenger rail capacity needs.

Metra, IDOT, and the CREATE Partners have coordinated consistently during the scoping and design of the P2 Project. The broader 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP), the largest project in the CREATE's Program, which will drastically improve the movement of freight through one of the most congested railroad corridors on the National Freight Network. The P2 Project will continue to build upon three other critical 75th St. CIP Projects: 71st Street Grade Separation (GS19) project and 80th Street Junction Replacements (EW2), both of which are currently under construction, and the Forest Hill Flyover (P3) that was completed in November 2025.

The P2 Project improvements will also help sustain and grow the United States' freight economy, a primary goal of the CREATE Program. The implementation of P2 as a component of the 75th St CIP is critical to address increasing travel times in the Terminal that will reduce the competitiveness of the regional market. Chicago's rail system handles nearly half of the nation's intermodal rail containers, 28% of all rail cars, and \$641 billion of goods transported on rail annually. The region's freight industry cluster accounts for approximately 190,000 jobs and over \$14 billion in personal income for the American workers, with freight railroads directly employing nearly 12,000 people and indirectly supporting an additional 26,000 jobs.

Grant funding for CREATE's P2 Project application will enable Amtrak to continue building upon their service across the center of the country as is called for in FRA's Midwest Regional Rail Plan. Amtrak recorded the best ridership ever in 2025, and Chicago Union Station has consistently been the nation's fourth-busiest Amtrak station. Currently, Amtrak operates over 50 daily trains that originate from Union Station. Completion of the P2 Project will open some additional train slots for additional Amtrak intercity passenger rail and Metra regional rail service as the project allows Metra's SouthWest Service (SWS) Line trains to shift from Union Station to instead terminate at Metra's LaSalle Street Station. Federal funding from this round of FRA's NRP Program will allow the public-private-partnership to continue construction of the next 75th St. CIP program element without delay, supporting thousands of construction jobs.

In 2025, ridership on Amtrak's Cardinal service was nearly 100,000 riders, and Metra had nearly 1,000,000 riders on the SWS Line and over 2,000,000 passengers on the Rock Island (RI) Line. Upon completion of CREATE Project P2, the Amtrak Cardinal service performance is expected to improve by eliminating freight conflicts. Amtrak can add more service capacity for intercity passenger rail trains while reducing conflicts with freight trains and Metra's regional passenger trains. Metra will have the capability to revise passenger train schedules to meet changing ridership characteristics and better serve Historically Disadvantaged Communities along these two lines.

Constructing CREATE Project P2 will eliminate the most congested rail chokepoint in the Chicago Terminal, Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains per day cross each other's paths. The rail-rail flyover at 75th Street will eliminate conflict between 30 SWS Line Metra trains and 35 freight trains operating on the Western Avenue Corridor (CSX). The railroad infrastructure will be grounded with numerous community mobility improvements.

Metra strongly supports IDOT's CREATE P2 Project application.

Sincerely,



Jim Derwinski  
CEO/Executive Director

**AMTRAK**

1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001

Email: Roger.Harris@amtrak.com Tel: 202.906.2408

**Roger Harris**  
President



February 6, 2026

The Honorable David A. Fink  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fink:

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) fully supports the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application, on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, for funding through the National Railroad Partnership Program.

To support this Project, Amtrak will provide \$15 million in non-federal matching funds (Program Income).

Federal funding will advance CREATE's Rock Island Connection project (P2), the next phase of the larger 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, which will construct a flyover bridge to eliminate a major chokepoint and reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains. P2 directly aligns with the goals of the National Railroad Partnership Program by improving reliability, travel times, and safety for both passenger and freight trains in the country's most congested rail terminal. P2 is necessary to fully realize the delay reductions for freight rail users at Belt Junction once passenger trains are separated from freight traffic.

A key benefit of the project is to reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains in the corridor, which use the same tracks at the Belt Junction. Freight operators run 90 trains through the corridor daily, Amtrak runs 3 weekly Cardinal trains (serving 98,583 riders in FY2025), and Metra currently runs 30 SWS trains daily through the corridor (serving 976,376 riders in 2024). Because passenger trains are prioritized, freight trains are curtailed at least twice daily on the corridor, during peak morning and afternoon commuting periods (totaling six hours daily) and occasionally during non-peak periods. Rerouting Metra SWS using the P2 bridge will improve freight flows through Belt Junction, particularly to and from the adjacent NS Landers Intermodal Yard (which reported 382,329 annual lifts in 2023).

The P2 project is also critical to improving passenger rail performance across the Chicago terminal and the Midwest. Chicago's Union Station (CUS) is the National Network's busiest station, home to 17 intercity lines and serving more than 3 million customers annually. P2 will greatly improve the reliability of passenger rail service at CUS by allowing Metra to direct 30 daily trains away from CUS to the LaSalle Street Station. This change strengthens Amtrak's ability to provide reliable service with improved travel times and reduced freight conflicts for intercity rail service across the Midwest, including the Cardinal route, which connects New York Penn Station and Chicago Union Station via major destinations such as Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Charlottesville, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis.

The P2 project advances the CREATE Program's overarching goals—increasing the efficiency, capacity, safety, and reliability of passenger and freight rail throughout Chicago and the nation. Chicago is the nation's premier freight hub, handling nearly **half of all intermodal containers** and **one-third of U.S.**

*Administrator Fink  
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**carload freight.** This investment is not merely an infrastructure upgrade – it is pivotal step toward enhancing supply chain resilience and driving economic growth nationwide.

Amtrak fully supports this application for National Railroad Partnership Program funding and looks forward to the successful implementation of the P2 project.

Sincerely,

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

Roger Harris  
*President*