

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 29, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are writing to support the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. This project would improve a segment of the Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements (referred to as "EW2"). Specifically, this would reconfigure the Belt Railway Company (BRC) main tracks between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Belt Junction, where four freight railroads conflict with one another as well as Metra's SouthWest Service operations.

This project is part of the larger 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP), comprised of four smaller CREATE projects along two passenger routes and six freight rail lines. The first two components of the CIP (P3: Forest Hill Flyover and GS19: 71st Street Grade Separation) were supported by a 2018 Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects Program (INFRA) grant and began construction in October 2022. The remaining two components, EW2: 80th Street Junction Improvements and P2: Rock Island Connection, are critical to ensure the complete benefits of the project.

This segment of the EW2 project will reconfigure Belt Railway Company (BRC), Norfolk Southern, and Metra tracks. A third BRC main track will be constructed, eliminating multiple conflicting paths for freight, Metra, and Amtrak trains. This project will help to alleviate the most congested rail chokepoint in North America in the Chicago Terminal—the Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross paths each day. This project also will improve performance on the Amtrak Cardinal service by eliminating freight conflicts.

Project EW2 aligns with the CREATE Program's overall goals to improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area, while reducing the environmental impacts of rail operations on the public. Beyond these regional benefits, this will improve the national supply chain, as the project will increase efficiency by supporting the movement of people and goods along by rail. Environmental justice is a key component of the 75th St. CIP, providing both education and workforce opportunities as well as community mobility improvements that will enhance safety, accessibility, quality of life, and the transit-riding experience. Neighboring communities also will benefit from cleaner air, reduced delays, improved economic potential, and smoother operations along freight and passenger rail systems.

We ask for your full consideration of this project. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices should you have any questions.

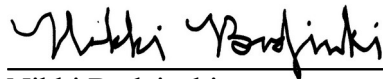
Sincerely,



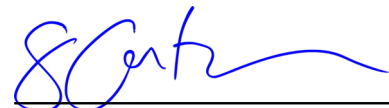
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



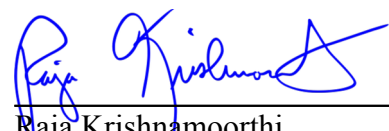
Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



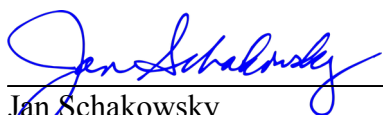
Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress

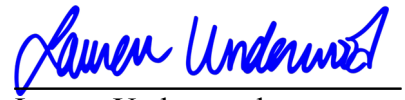


Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress

  
Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

  
Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress