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December 15, 2025

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 Illinois Municipal League (IML) 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. The CREATE Program is the largest public-private partnership of its kind, involving the nation's rail industry and all levels of government.

Federal funding will advance CREATE's Rock Island Connection project (P2), the next phase of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, which will construct a flyover bridge to eliminate a chokepoint and reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains. P2 will improve reliability, travel times and safety for both passenger and freight trains in the country's most congested rail terminal.

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. Because passenger trains are prioritized, freight trains are curtailed at least twice daily during peak morning and afternoon commuting periods. Rerouting Metra SWS using the P2 bridge will improve freight flows through Belt Junction.

P2 advances CREATE'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. carload freight. This investment is a pivotal step toward economic growth nationwide.

IML fully supports this application and looks forward to the successful implementation of the P2 project.

Please feel welcome to contact me if I may be of assistance with this or any other matter. I may be reached by phone (w: 217-525-1220; c: 618-201-7320) or by email (bcole@iml.org). Thanks.

Yours very truly,

BRAD COLE
Chief Executive Officer

c: IML Board of Directors

