



395 John Ireland Boulevard  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

August 24, 2023

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

Re: Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Common Application for the Belt Junction and  
80<sup>th</sup> Street Junction Replacements on Behalf of the CREATE Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is pleased to support the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant common application for the Belt Junction and 80<sup>th</sup> Street Junction Replacements (defined as "EW2") on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREAT) Program. This project will reconfigure the Belt Railway Company (BRC) main tracks between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Belt Junction, where four freight railroads conflict with each other and Metra's Southwest Service operations.

This segment of the EW2 project will reconfigure the 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 start to alleviate the congestion at the most congested rail chokepoint in North America in the Chicago Terminal, the Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross paths per day. This project will also improve performance on the Amtrak Cardinal service by eliminating freight conflicts in the vicinity of 80th Street.

These improvements will have a major impact on the national supply chain. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods along important railway systems and communities throughout the nation. Environmental justice is a critical part of the project with both education and workforce opportunities and community mobility improvements that will enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life and visual appeal of the community and enhance the transit-riding experience. Not only do these projects support economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced railroad delays, improved economic development potential and more fluid freight and passenger rail systems.

Thank you for your interest and support to improve the regional railroad system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Nancy Daubenberger'.

Nancy Daubenberger, P.E.  
Commissioner

cc: Nora Goebelbecker, Project Manager, R.M Chin & Associates, Inc.

*Equal Opportunity Employer*