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MATERIALS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC

January 16, 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,

I am writing in strong support of 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. Funding for this project is essential to improve safety at roadway crossings and enhance supply chain fluidity across both road and rail networks, while also reducing the negative impacts of freight movement on nearby communities.

Federal funding will advance CREATE's Rock Island Connection project (P2), the next phase of the larger 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project. This phase 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 rail in the nation's most congested rail terminal.

A key benefit of the project is the reduction of conflicts between freight and passenger trains that currently share tracks at Belt Junction. Because passenger trains are prioritized, freight trains are curtailed at least twice daily during peak morning and afternoon commuting periods—totaling six hours per day—and occasionally during non-peak periods. Rerouting Metra's SouthWest Service using the P2 bridge will improve freight flows through Belt Junction, particularly to and from the adjacent Norfolk Southern Landers Intermodal Yard, which reported 382,329 annual lifts in 2023.

The P2 project advances the CREATE Program's overarching goals of 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 not merely an infrastructure upgrade—it is a pivotal step toward strengthening supply chain resilience and driving economic growth nationwide.

Given the transformative potential of this project, I strongly support the IDOT's application and urge you to grant them full consideration and funding. If you have any questions, please contact my District Director, Adrian Calderón, at Adrian.Calderon@mail.house.gov or (773) 342-0774.

Sincerely,



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress
Illinois' 4th Congressional District