

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

January 16, 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:

I am writing regarding 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.

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

Currently, freight and passenger trains share tracks at Belt Junction, creating significant delays. Freight operators run approximately 90 trains daily through the corridor, while Metra operates 30 Southwest Service trains, and Amtrak runs three weekly Cardinal trains. Rerouting Metra via the P2 bridge will improve freight flows through Belt Junction, particularly to and from the adjacent NS Landers Intermodal Yard, which handled 382,329 lifts in 2023. This change will also enhance nationwide freight movement and strengthen supply chains.

The P2 project is equally important for passenger rail performance. Chicago's Union Station, the busiest station in the National Network, serves more than 3 million customers annually and hosts 17 intercity lines. By redirecting Metra's 30 daily trains to LaSalle Street Station, P2 will improve reliability and travel times for Amtrak services across the Midwest, including the Cardinal route connecting New York and Chicago via major destinations such as Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Indianapolis.

Please give full and fair consideration to the Illinois Department of Transportation's CREATE Program's application. If you require additional information, please contact my State Director, Clarisol Duque, at (312) 353-4952.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator