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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:

On behalf of the Federation of Women Contractors (FWC), I am pleased to express our strong support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's 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 nation's largest public-private rail partnership, and the Rock Island Connection project (P2) represents a critical next phase of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project. P2 will construct a flyover bridge to eliminate a major chokepoint and significantly reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains. This investment directly advances the goals of the National Railroad Partnership Program by improving safety, system reliability, and travel times within the country's most congested rail terminal.

Currently, approximately 90 freight trains, 30 daily Metra Southwest Service trains, and Amtrak's Cardinal service all share the corridor, resulting in daily curtailments of freight traffic during peak commuting periods. By rerouting Metra service over the P2 bridge, the project will substantially improve freight mobility through Belt Junction and to and from the adjacent NS Landers Intermodal Yard, while also strengthening regional passenger rail performance.

The P2 project will also enhance operations at Chicago Union Station, the busiest station in the national passenger rail network. Diverting Metra trains to LaSalle Street Station will improve reliability at Union Station, support Amtrak's intercity service, and reduce congestion that affects passenger and freight rail movements across the Midwest.

As the nation's premier freight hub—handling nearly half of all intermodal containers and one-third of U.S. carload freight—Chicago's rail system is central to national supply chains. The Rock Island Connection project is not simply an infrastructure upgrade; it is a strategic investment in economic efficiency, supply-chain resilience, and long-term regional and national competitiveness.

FWC fully supports this application and looks forward to the successful implementation of the P2 project through an award under the National Railroad Partnership Program.

Sincerely,

**Jaemie L. Neely, MPA**

Executive Director

Federation of Women Contractors