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## Chicago Area Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust

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January 14, 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 on behalf of the Chicago Area Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust ("LECET") to confirm LECET's full 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. The CREATE Program is the largest public-private partnership of its kind, involving the nation's rail industry and all levels of government.

Chicago Area LECET is a labor-management organization comprised of the 15 local unions affiliated with the Laborers International Union of North America who make up the Laborers' District Council of Chicago & Vicinity and its approximate 1,200 signatory contractors. LECET represents reputable, experienced contractors and over 14,000 union Laborers in the nine-county area of Northeastern Illinois. Our signatory contractors proudly fund and participate in the Chicago Laborers' District Council Apprenticeship Program, which requires a minimum of 2,400 hours of on-the-job work training and 360 hours of classroom training over the course of two years before one may become a journey worker.

Federal funding will advance CREATE's Rock Island Connection project (P2), the next phase of the larger 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, which 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 trains in the country's most congested rail terminal. P2 is necessary to fully realize the delay reductions for freight rail users at Belt Junction once passenger trains are separated from freight traffic. Rerouting Metra SWS using the P2 bridge will improve freight flows through Belt Junction, particularly to and from the adjacent NS Landers Intermodal Yard (which reported 382,329 annual lifts in 2023).

The P2 project is also critical to improving passenger rail performance across the Chicago terminal and the Midwest. Chicago's Union Station (CUS) is the National Network's busiest station, home to 17 intercity lines and serving more than 3 million customers annually. The P2 project advances the CREATE Program'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 not merely an infrastructure upgrade – it is pivotal step toward enhancing supply chain resilience and driving economic growth nationwide

For all of these reasons, Chicago Area LECET fully supports this application and looks forward to the project's successful implementation of the P2 project with your award of the National Railroad Partnership Program.

Sincerely,

Patrick S. Hosty  
Executive Director

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Executive Director

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LECET Chairman  
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