

Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors

A American Container & Trailer Leasing

AECOM

Alameda Corridor-East Project, San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

California Department of Transportation

Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

Canaveral Port Authority

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

City of Chicago

City of Industry

COMPASS – Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho

DCLI

Florida Department of Transportation

Florida East Coast Railway

Florida Ports Council

Florida Transportation Builders' Association, Inc.

GATX Corporation

Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company

HNTB Corporation

I-40 Trade Port Corridor

Illinois Department of Transportation

Intermodal Association of North America

Jacobs

Joliet Arsenal Development Authority

Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Majestic Realty Co.

Memphis Chamber of Commerce

Moffatt & Nichol

January 5, 2025

The Honorable David Fink
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fink:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is seeking National Railroad Partnership Program funds on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's **Rock Island Connection Project (P2)**. IDOT is a member of the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) – a national group dedicated to improving our nation's freight infrastructure.

The CREATE Program is the largest public-private partnership of its kind. Federal funding will advance CREATE's 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 will improve reliability, travel times, and safety for both passenger and freight trains in the country's most congested rail terminal.

A key benefit of the project is to reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains. Freight operators run 90 trains through the corridor daily, Amtrak runs 3 weekly Cardinal trains, and Metra currently runs 30 SWS trains daily. Due to the prioritization of passenger trains, freight trains are curtailed at least twice a day on the corridor during peak commuting periods (totaling six hours daily) and occasionally during non-peak periods. Rerouting Metra SWS using the P2 bridge will improve freight flows through Belt Junction.

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 enhancing supply chain resilience and driving economic growth across the country.

We hope you will consider the merits of the **P2 Project**. As an organization, we support investments in freight infrastructure, and we encourage USDOT to continue investing in goods movement projects through the National Railroad Partnership Program. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Elaine Nettle
Executive Director

National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association

NASCO – North American Strategy for Competitiveness

The Northwest Seaport Alliance

Nossaman LLP

Orange County Transportation Authority

Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

Port Houston

Port Newark Container Terminal

Port of Hueneme

Port of Long Beach

Port of Los Angeles

Port of New Orleans

Port of Oakland

Port of San Diego

Port Tampa Bay

Port of Vancouver USA

Ports America Chesapeake

Prime Focus, LLC

Puget Sound Regional Council

SANDAG - San Diego Association of Governments

Southern California Association of Governments

Strong Port Strategies

Tennessee Department of Transportation

Washington State Department of Transportation

Will County Center for Economic Development

WSP