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May 27, 2026

The Honorable David A. Fink
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fink:

The Illinois Municipal League (IML) fully supports the Illinois Department of Transportation's application, on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, for funding through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (CRISI). The CREATE Program is the largest public-private partnership of its kind, involving the nation's rail industry and all levels of government.

Federal funding will advance the CREATE Program's Rock Island Connection (P2) project, 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 using the same tracks at the Belt Junction. Because passenger trains are prioritized, freight trains are curtailed daily in the corridor. P2 is critical to improving passenger rail performance and will greatly improve the reliability of passenger rail service across the Chicago terminal and the Midwest by allowing Metra to direct trains away from Chicago Union Station. This change strengthens Amtrak's ability to provide reliable service with improved travel times and reduced freight conflicts for intercity rail service.

P2 helps achieve the CREATE Program's overall goals to improve operations in the Chicago metropolitan area and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods near rail. This investment is not merely an infrastructure upgrade, it is a pivotal step toward enhancing supply chain resilience and driving economic growth nationwide.

IML fully supports this application and looks forward to the project's successful implementation.

Please feel welcome to contact me if I may be of assistance with this or any other matter. I may be reached by phone at (217) 525-1220 or by email at bcole@iml.org. Thanks.

Yours very truly,



BRAD COLE
Chief Executive Officer

c: Jim Derwinski, Chief Executive Officer, Metra

