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AN EXELON COMPANY

April __, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Commonwealth Edison Company (“ComEd”) is supportive of IDOT’s applications for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG) and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Programs funding on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. It is ComEd’s understanding that these grants will fund the first segment of the Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements project, known as EW2a. The project includes reconfiguring the Belt Railway Company (BRC) main tracks between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Belt Junction where four freight railroad tracks intersect with each other and Metra’s SouthWest Service operations.

ComEd is aware that project segment EW2a will reconfigure Belt Railway Company (BRC), Norfolk Southern (NS), and Metra tracks and rebuild 14 century-old railroad structures, including 86 bridges, over local streets in three South Side Chicago neighborhoods. A third dedicated BRC main track will be constructed, eliminating route conflicts for freight and Metra trains. This project will begin to alleviate what ComEd understands is one of the most congested rail chokepoint in North America, Chicago’s Belt Junction, where 30 Metra and 90 freight trains cross each other’s paths each day. The project will also improve neighborhood connectivity by replacing railroad structures over city streets and will set the stage for re-routing Metra’s SouthWest Service trains out of Union Station and into LaSalle Street station via upcoming CREATE project P2, which will greatly increase Union Station capacity for future Amtrak intercity and Metra commuter rail service.

Project segment EW2a helps achieve the CREATE Program’s overall goals to improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area and improve quality of life in neighborhoods near rail. These CMIs enhance the safety, accessibility, quality of life, and visual appeal of the community while enhancing local transportation systems for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving. Not only does EW2a support broader economic growth, but neighboring communities also benefit from cleaner air, reduced railroad delays, and improved development opportunities.

ComEd looks forward to the project’s successful implementation.

Sincerely,

Dale Player
Vice President of Engineering & Smart Grid