



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

May 28, 2024

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

RE: Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the Illinois Department of Transportation's application for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG) and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program will use these funds for 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.

EW2a helps achieve the CREATE Program's overall goal to advance the quality of life in neighborhoods near rail and improve rail operations in the Chicago metropolitan area. The project will 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, which will greatly increase Union Station capacity for future Amtrak intercity and Metra commuter rail service. Additionally, this project will begin to alleviate 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.

These improvements will have a significant positive impact on the national supply chain. The efficiencies resulting from this project support the movement of people and consumer goods throughout the nation. The project also includes investments in K-12 education and workforce opportunities, both of which are some of my Administration's highest priorities. These community mobility improvements 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. This is why I fully support this application and look forward to the project's successful implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker".

Governor JB Pritzker