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Congress of the United States  
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May 14, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to provide my strong support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's application for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG) and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Programs funding (CRISI) on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE). These grants will fund the first segment of the Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements project, known as EW2a. These initiatives will reconfigure the intersection of four freight railroad tracks and help improve the efficiency and safety of rail operations across the Chicagoland area.

These initiatives are a key component of the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) - a grouping of four major improvements that make up the most complex portion of the overall CREATE Program. These four improvements are being advanced as a single project with the first two components of the CIP construction taking place from October 2022 to early 2026. The remaining two project components of the CIP, projects EW2 and P2, are being designed as multiple initiatives, yet are critical to ensure the full benefits of the overall project, with EW2a being the first phase of the secondary effort.

EW2a will reconfigure and rebuild 14 century-old railroad structures, including 86 bridges, over local streets in three South Side Chicago neighborhoods. New dedicated rail tracks will be constructed, eliminating route conflicts for freight and Metra trains. 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. 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, which will greatly increase Union Station capacity for future Amtrak intercity and Metra commuter rail service.

I would like to reiterate my full support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's grant funding request. I greatly appreciate your careful consideration of the grant application.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress