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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

RE: Multimodal Project and Consolidated Rail Application for
CREATE Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of the Illinois Department of Transportation application for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Programs funding on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. CREATE is integral to the communities and transportation priorities of the 39th legislative district that I represent in the Illinois Senate.

These federal grants will fund the first segment of the Belt Junction and 80th Street Junction Replacements project, known as EW2a, a component of the improvements that make up the most complex portion of the overall CREATE Program. These improvements are being advanced as a single project due to their logistical and environmental linkages. Project segment EW2a will reconfigure Belt Railway Company, Norfolk Southern, 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 main track will be constructed, eliminating route conflicts for freight and Metra passenger trains. This project will begin to alleviate the most congested rail chokepoint in North America, have a positive impact on the national supply chain, and enhance the safety and quality of life of the surrounding community while enhancing local transportation systems for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Harmon".
Don Harmon