



THE SENATE PRESIDENT  
STATE OF ILLINOIS

DON HARMON

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OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60302  
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January 23, 2026

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

RE: FRA National Railroad Partnership Program  
CREATE Rock Island Connection Project

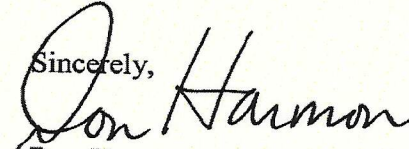
Dear Administrator Fink:

I write to support the Illinois Department of Transportation's application, on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, for funding through the National Railroad Partnership Program. CREATE is the largest public-private partnership of its kind, involving the nation's rail industry and all levels of government.

Federal funding will advance CREATE's Rock Island Connection project (P2), the next phase of the larger 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project, which will construct a flyover bridge to eliminate a major chokepoint in the Chicago Terminal at Belt Junction. By reducing conflicts between freight and passenger trains, P2 is necessary to fully realize delay reductions at Belt Junction, where 30 commuter Metra and 90 freight trains currently cross each other's paths on a daily basis.

Chicago is the nation's premier freight hub, handling nearly half of all intermodal containers and one-third of U.S. carload freight. This investment is not merely an infrastructure upgrade – it is a pivotal step toward enhancing supply chain resilience and driving economic growth nationwide. It is also critical to improving passenger rail performance across the Midwest. Chicago's Union Station is the National Network's busiest station, home to 17 intercity lines and serving more than 3 million customers annually. The P2 project will increase efficiency, capacity, safety, and reliability of passenger and freight rail throughout the nation, aligning with the goals of the National Railroad Partnership Program.

I support this grant application and look forward to the successful implementation of the P2 project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
  
Don Harmon