

United States Senate

June 14, 2026

The Honorable David A. Fink
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE W-32
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fink:

I am writing to express my support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application, on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, to the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) *Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)* program. Funds will support CREATE's *Rock Island Connection project (P2)*, the next phase of the larger *75th Street Corridor Improvement Project*.

The Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) mission is to provide safe, cost-effective transportation for Illinois' residents and visitors in ways that enhance quality of life, promote economic prosperity and demonstrate respect for the environment. The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program is the largest public-private partnership of its kind, involving the nation's rail industry and all levels of government. Chicago is the nation's premier freight hub, handling nearly half of all inter-modal containers and one-third of U.S. carload freight. Funds will support the *Rock Island Connection project (P2)*, the next phase of the larger *75th Street Corridor Improvement Project*, which will construct a flyover bridge to eliminate a major choke-point and reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains. *P2* is necessary to fully realize the delay reductions for freight rail users at Belt Junction once passenger trains are separated from freight traffic. This installation will reduce conflicts between freight and passenger trains in the corridor, while improving freight flows, particularly to and from the adjacent NS Landers Intermodal Yard which reported 382,329 annual lifts in 2023.

The *P2 project* is also critical to improving passenger rail performance across the Chicago terminal and the Midwest. Chicago's Union Station (CUS) is the National Network's busiest station, home to 17 intercity lines and serving more than 3 million customers annually. *P2* will greatly improve the reliability of passenger rail service at CUS by allowing Metra to direct 30 daily trains away from CUS to the LaSalle Street Station. This change strengthens Amtrak's ability to provide reliable service with improved travel times and reduced freight conflicts for intercity rail service across the Midwest, including the Cardinal route, which connects New York Penn Station and Chicago Union Station via major destinations such as Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Charlottesville, Cincinnati and Indianapolis.

As a U.S. Senator and member of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, I have made it a priority to modernize Illinois transportation systems, expand accessible transit and support investments that improve our environment. IDOT's application falls within the traditional bounds of the *CRISI* program by significantly improving safety, efficiency and reliability for both freight and passenger rail trains.

Please accept this letter of support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) application, on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, to the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) *Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)* program. In keeping with your existing rules and regulations, I urge you to give their application full and fair consideration. If you have any questions, please contact my State Director, Loren Harris, by calling (312) 886-3605.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tammy Duckworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tammy" and last name "Duckworth" clearly distinguishable.

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator