

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 2, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
West Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We are writing in support of the application led by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for a Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. This \$160 million grant will help complete construction of the largest and most complex CREATE project, the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP).

By improving the efficient movement of freight throughout the Midwest and the country, this project will have a nationally significant impact on our economy. Metropolitan Chicago is the hub of our state's and nation's freight transportation system: one quarter of all U.S. freight rail traffic originates, terminates, or passes through the Chicago area, and volumes are forecasted to increase 150 percent by 2040. The 75th Street CIP consists of four interrelated CREATE projects that will greatly improve the ability of our rail network to handle this growth.

This FASTLANE application features a more-than-sixty-five percent local match, contributed by railroads and state, county, and local governments. It also is unique in that it leverages previous local, state, and federal investments in CREATE that have the potential to greatly increase AMTRAK capacity.

This additional capacity will improve freight movement in the Midwest and enhance passenger rail service to downstate Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and points east—both key goals of the nine-state multi-agency Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.

Approval of this FASTLANE grant will move us closer toward the goal of completing the CREATE program by 2030. When CREATE is ultimately completed, it will help ensure that Chicago remains both livable and economically competitive as the nation's transportation and logistics hub, providing jobs for thousands of Illinoisans and enabling businesses to move their products to market in the United States and overseas efficiently and cost-effectively.

Absent this important project, freight rail traffic will continue to clog the network in Chicago and hurt our country's international competitiveness. If we act decisively as a region and nation, we can ensure that growth enhances rather than impairs our economy and quality of life.

We fully support this application and look forward to the project's successful implementation.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Daniel Lipinski
United States Representative



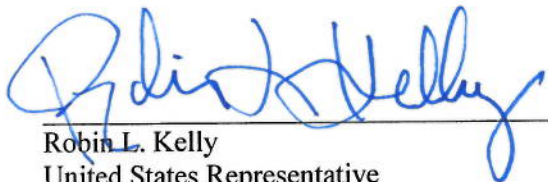
Mike Quigley
United States Representative



Rodney Davis
United States Representative



Cheri Bustos
United States Representative



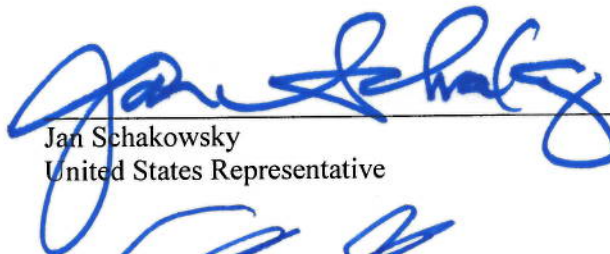
Robin L. Kelly
United States Representative



Luis V. Gutierrez
United States Representative



Bill Foster
United States Representative



Jan Schakowsky
United States Representative



Mike Bost
United States Representative



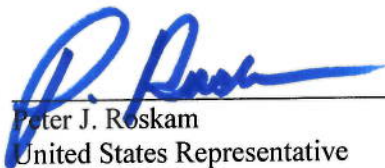
Adam Kinzinger
United States Representative



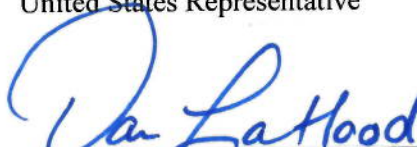
Raja Krishnamoorthi
United States Representative



Bradley S. Schneider
United States Representative



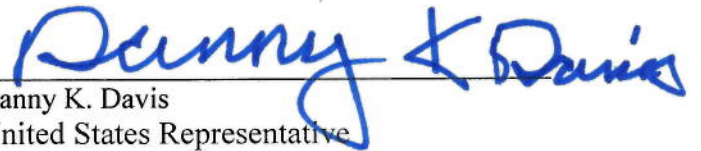
Peter J. Roskam
United States Representative



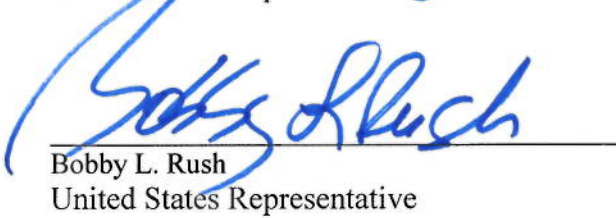
Darin LaHood
United States Representative



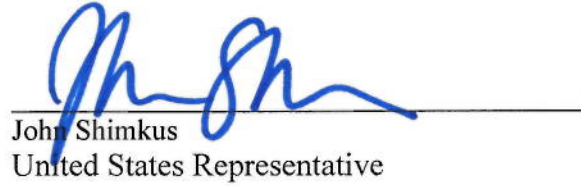
Randy Hultgren
United States Representative



Danny K. Davis
United States Representative



Bobby L. Rush
United States Representative



John Shimkus
United States Representative