

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 27, 2026

The Honorable David Fink
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration, USDOT
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Byl Herrmann
Interim President
Amtrak
1 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Administrator Fink and Interim President Herrmann:

We write regarding the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) recent National Railroad Partnership Program (Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail) grant awarded to Amtrak for the "Midwest Maintenance Facilities Modernization P3" project.

Earlier this month, USDOT awarded more than \$696 million to Amtrak for much-needed rail improvements in the Chicago area, including \$572 million to support improvements to Amtrak's Chicago maintenance operations. As you know, Chicago is the rail hub of North America, with more tracks radiating in more directions than any other city. Roughly 25 percent of freight trains and 50 percent of intermodal trains pass through metropolitan Chicago. Any improvements to Chicago's rail infrastructure yield immeasurable impacts not only to the entire Midwest region, but the whole country's rail network—both passenger and freight movement alike.

We have long-supported projects that seek to improve Amtrak's on-time performance, reduce service interruptions and cancellations, and yield greater safety and satisfaction for customers. Amtrak has stated that its intention for the maintenance facilities project is to help it more efficiently maintain passenger railcars, to lead to these shared outcomes. Amtrak expects the project to support approximately 3,000 jobs in Illinois, including union and skilled labor positions.

At the same time, regarding the maintenance facilities award, our offices have heard concerns from residents and local elected officials in Chicago's Bridgeport neighborhood. They are requesting greater transparency and communication from Amtrak as it seeks to relocate its current 14th Street maintenance facility to what is presently Union Pacific's Canal Street Yard. Specifically, the residents would like more information about the plans for the facility, its operations, and any expected community impacts, including but not limited to environmental concerns such as noise, safety, and traffic levels.

We ask that both the FRA and Amtrak be responsive to the community and provide both residents and local officials with greater detail and insight into Amtrak's plans to relocate the maintenance yard. Further, we ask that any such improvements to Amtrak's maintenance operations in the Chicago area be accompanied by a robust and transparent conversation with the residents who may be impacted.

We appreciate your timely attention to this matter and await your response.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator