

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-1304  
June 24, 2015

The Honorable Anthony Foxx  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I am writing in support of Metra's application for a TIGER VII grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to replace and expand the Milwaukee District -West (MD-W) Fox River Bridge.

The MD-W Fox River Bridge is an integral part of Chicago's rail infrastructure. Metra's plan calls to replace the bridge's 19<sup>th</sup> century, single-track structure with a modern, double-track structure. In addition, the bridge's signal technology, which has elements that date back to the 1950s, will be upgraded. The current condition of the bridge causes speed restrictions, train conflicts, and signal problems. Combined, these issues waste 36,000 passenger-hours every year.

Metra forecasts that upgrading the bridge will save passengers a total of 1.2 million person-hours, valued at \$4.8 million, over the expected lifespan (30-40 years) of the new track and signal equipment. It will also rid the rail line of traffic bottleneck by replacing the sole remaining single-track segment. In addition, Canadian Pacific, who is contributing funds towards the project's 50% local match, will see their freight operations benefit from increased speeds, reliability, and capacity.

The MD-W Fox River Bridge serves 49 Metra commuter trains and up to eight freight trains daily. The MD-W rail line, which it serves, acts as a detour route for freight traffic in the Chicago region. Operation at the bridge also affects 6.8 million passengers a year on the MD-W commuter rail line.

Funding for the replacement and upgrades of the MD-W Fox River Bridge will help to improve an integral part of Chicago's rail infrastructure. Therefore, I strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to give the most serious consideration to Metra's application.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

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