

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2022

Mr. Joseph Parsons
President & CEO
Iowa Interstate Railroad
5900 6th Street Southwest
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

Mr. Omer Osman
Secretary
Illinois Department of Transportation
2300 S. Dirksen Parkway
Springfield, IL 62764

Dear Mr. Parsons and Secretary Osman,

We write to express our strong concern about the lack of progress toward a final agreement between the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) on the infrastructure upgrades needed to begin rail passenger service on the proposed route between Chicago and the Quad Cities in Illinois. Residents of the Quad Cities have waited far too long for passenger service to Chicago to become a reality, and we urge both parties to come to an agreement on the scope and costs of the project as soon as possible so that construction can begin.

Significant federal and state funds have been available to advance this important project for years. IDOT received \$177 million in federal funds to initiate passenger service between Chicago and the Quad Cities in 2010. Although the project was halted by the state's previous governor, Governor Pritzker renewed the state's commitment to the project by providing \$225 million in state funding in 2019. The City of Moline also has committed funding to advance this project, constructing a multi-modal transportation center, which will serve as the station for the new passenger rail route.

After years of unnecessary delays, the last remaining hurdle to construction is an agreement between IDOT and IAIS on the upgrades needed to convert IAIS' existing freight tracks for passenger service. The new passenger route will run on IAIS's tracks between Bureau County and Moline. In 2019, we secured a five-year extension of the project's federal funding from the Federal Railroad Administration to provide ample time for IDOT and IAIS to negotiate an agreement and for construction to begin on the project. If an agreement is not reached soon, construction could be delayed even further, jeopardizing the federal funds for the project.

It's far past time for IDOT and IAIS to conclude negotiations and reach a fair agreement that will allow this new passenger rail service to become a reality. Passenger rail service between Chicago and the Quad Cities was originally promised to begin in 2014. This project maintains strong support and financial commitment at the federal, state, and local levels. New passenger rail service between Chicago and the Quad Cities will help grow the local economy, create jobs, and connect folks from across our state with new opportunities.

We urge you to reach an agreement on the scope, design, and construction of necessary upgrades promptly. If this is not possible, we request a meeting with both parties to understand better the remaining challenges to reaching an agreement.

As we have for years, we stand ready to help in any way we can to advance this too long delayed project.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress