



November 28, 2022

Amit Bose, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose:

On behalf of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), please accept this letter of support for the Vermont Agency of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant application, "Tri-State Regional Rail Upgrade Project."

As we understand the initiative, the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad (SLR) is partnering with the states of Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire on this grant project. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTRANS) is the lead applicant for the application. Matching funds are being provided by the States of Maine and New Hampshire, as well as the SLR to make the project an innovative public-private partnership.

After decades of investment in this corridor by the State of Maine and the SLR, along with investment coordinated by AVCOG to enhance rail siding development adjacent to the City of Auburn's intermodal terminal, this is the final work needed to complete the three-state modern heavy haul rail freight corridor and achieve 286,000 lb. railcar weight capacity for current and future Maine businesses. Railcar shipments are currently restricted to 263,000 lbs. which results in inefficient shipment of partially loaded freight cars. This puts our manufacturers and distribution businesses in our region at a competitive disadvantage.

Access to the national rail network is very important for supply chain efficiency and is referenced as a key objective in the most recent Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that AVCOG completed for our region, through EDA support. Our region has several key businesses that depend on the SLR for the movement of wood pulp and chemicals for the paper making industry, propane for heating fuel, lumber, and other commodities.

Please give this CRISI grant application serious consideration for selection and award.

Regards,

Amy Landry
Executive Director