

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

April 21, 2023

Mr. Amit Bose
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

I am pleased to support the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) application for Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). If awarded, funding will help to support the expansion of the existing state-supported Amtrak *Hiawatha Service* that operates between Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Chicago, Illinois to 10 daily round trips.

The *Hiawatha Service* is a vital component of the transportation network for the Southeast Wisconsin and Northeast Illinois regions and provides safe, reliable, and efficient rail service for thousands of passengers every day. According to WisDOT, the *Hiawatha Service* is one of the busiest Amtrak routes in the nation, and the busiest route in the Midwest, with nearly 830,000 passengers annually in 2019 prior to the pandemic. Ridership has continued to improve and in 2022 the route saw over 540,000 riders. Ridership had more than doubled since the service began providing seven round trips daily in 2003, and the traveling public and business community of Southeast Wisconsin and Northeast Illinois have come to rely on this service.

WisDOT has worked closely with the Illinois Department of Transportation, FRA, and Amtrak since 2012 on planning for the expansion of *Hiawatha Service*, including on the preparation of a draft Service Development Plan, environmental documentation, and engineering and capital cost estimates for necessary corridor improvements. All three entities have had significant roles on the project as funding partners, technical support, and railroad coordination support. In developing this Corridor, WisDOT will work with FRA to complete a Service Development Plan and PE/NEPA for the corridor in consultation with Illinois DOT, Tribal and local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Amtrak, hosts railroads, and other interested parties. The Corridor is critical to meet future passenger demand, decrease road congestion along the busy I-94 corridor, expand travel options, and increase multimodal connections between Milwaukee and Chicago – all while ensuring accessibility for all users. The Corridor is also the impetus for expansions to Green Bay, Madison, and Eau Claire in Wisconsin, and St. Paul and Minneapolis in Minnesota.

I strongly support projects that help to improve our regional transportation infrastructure for all users. For this reason, I request full and fair consideration be given to WisDOT's application for Corridor ID program funding. Please keep my staff informed on the progress of this application by e-mail at projects_grants@baldwin.senate.gov. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator