

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 23, 2017

Chairwoman Ann Begeman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington DC 20423

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Dear Chairwoman Begeman:

We write in support of the Illinois Toll Highway Authority's ('Tollway') petition before the Surface Transportation Board in its ongoing dispute with Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) over the Elgin O'Hare Western Access (EOWA) project, a vital project for residents of our state with significant regional and national impacts. To prevent a halt in construction that would result in substantial and unplanned costs to the state of Illinois, we urge you to limit the scope of the current proceeding to the pressing issue at hand and to move quickly to confirm the Tollway's right to proceed with the next phase of the project.

The Tollway plans to begin construction this fall on the next phase of the \$3.4 billion EOWA project, which involves the construction of a Western Access Interchange including several bridges that will span rail tracks owned by CP and Union Pacific and provide much needed and long planned western access to O'Hare International Airport. The Western Access Interchange is arguably the most critical component of EOWA and is an essential element of the O'Hare Modernization Program. Completion of this project would transform the region's transportation network, reducing traffic congestion in the area and furthering opportunities for economic and residential growth. The Illinois Governor's Advisory Council estimates that approximately 65,000 permanent jobs will be created as a result of EOWA by 2040. As a result of the project's effects on the regional economy and the national impact of expanded freight and passenger connectivity to one of the country's largest airports, the U.S. Department of Transportation designated EOWA as a Project of National and Regional Significance—one of only 26 projects to receive this coveted title.

Despite years of planning and coordination with the Tollway on the EOWA project, CP's recent decision to refuse further negotiations on the project's next phase threatens to halt construction, risking a loss of local jobs and construction contracts and potentially costing the Tollway an additional \$200,000 per month for the delay. We're especially concerned that CP's refusal to cooperate could jeopardize the \$140 million that the federal government has already invested in the project. While we understand that CP has concerns with conceptual plans for a later phase of the project involving CP's Bensenville Rail Yard, the scope of the Tollway's petition before the STB is specifically and appropriately limited to the more urgent issue of the Western Access Interchange. Disagreement over the later phase is reason to come back to the negotiating table to find a solution that works for all parties, not to stand in the way of the non-controversial Western Access Interchange that will have little to no effect on CP's rail operations.

We urge you to give full and fair consideration to the Tollway's petition in order to avoid costly delays and allow the Tollway to move forward with their construction timeline for the EOWA project, which remains vital to our regional, state, and national transportation network.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

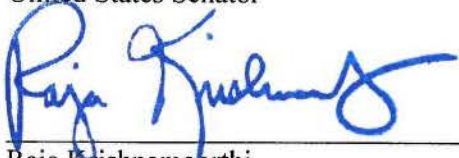
Sincerely,



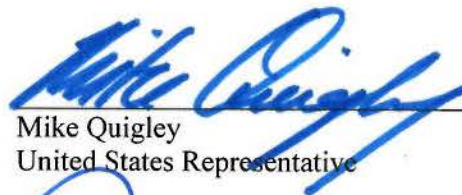
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



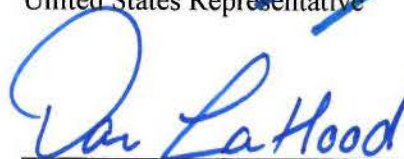
Raja Krishnamoorthi
United States Representative



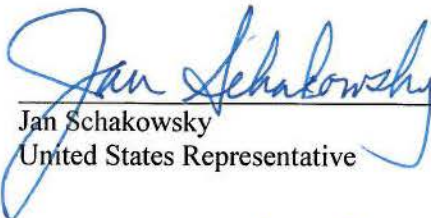
Mike Quigley
United States Representative



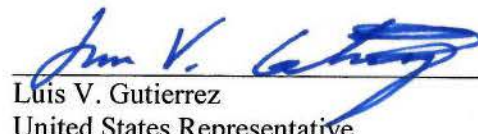
Bill Foster
United States Representative



Darin LaHood
United States Representative



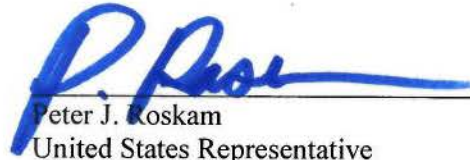
Jan Schakowsky
United States Representative



Luis V. Gutierrez
United States Representative



Randy Hultgren
United States Representative



Peter J. Koskam
United States Representative



Danny K. Davis
United States Representative



Rodney Davis
United States Representative



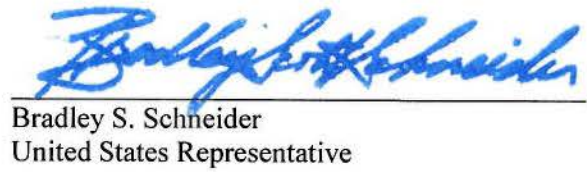
Adam Kinzinger
United States Representative



Cheri Bustos
United States Representative



Robin L. Kelly
United States Representative



Bradley S. Schneider
United States Representative



Daniel Lipinski
United States Representative



Bobby L. Rush
United States Representative