



*THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE*  
*DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION*



*William Cass, P.E.*  
*Assistant Commissioner*

*Andre Briere*  
*Deputy Commissioner*

November 23, 2022

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

Dear Administrator Bose:

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Maine Department of Transportation would like to express our very strong 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."

NHDOT has worked in partnership with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad (SLR) for many years to upgrade this important rail freight corridor across our state through a series of public-private partnership grants with matching private railroad funding. While the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTRANS) is the lead applicant for the application, matching funds are being provided by the State of New Hampshire, State of Maine, and the SLR to make the project a regional public-private partnership. The State of New Hampshire has availed \$500,000 of state capital funds for this project. After years of investment in this corridor by all three states and the SLR, **this is the final work needed** to complete the tri-state modern heavy haul rail freight corridor and achieve 286,000 lb. railcar weight capacity for current and future New Hampshire businesses. Railcar shipments are currently restricted to 263,000 lbs., which results in inefficient shipment of partially loaded freight cars, and this puts our New Hampshire businesses at a competitive disadvantage; this will allow competitive shipping between New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and the rest of North America.

The SLR mainline will receive new, heavier continuous welded rail, ties, ballast, and grade crossing rehabilitation and this project will build upon years of concerted efforts, by the SLR and the three states, to improve to and rehabilitate this line to continue to allow rail freight movement of multiple commodities, help provide safer operations, and allow a safe increase in the volume of rail cars

The area of New Hampshire served by this route is the "North Country." This portion of our state is very rural and economic development has been challenging. After years of decline of the paper industry, the area is trying to rebound with new businesses and opportunities and having access to the national rail network is very important for supply chain efficiency and attracting new industries. Currently the SLR handles propane for business and home heating, wood pulp for paper manufacturing, and plastic pellets for pipe manufacturing, but this area lacks direct access to the Interstate highway system, making the rail line and its connections to three Class I railroads even more important. Additionally, the SLR's freight corridor is the only connection to our state-owned North Stratford and Groveton branch lines, currently operated by New Hampshire Central Railroad, and is the only rail

access for moving equipment for the Conway Scenic Railroad that operates tourist trains on the state-owned Mountain Division Railroad Line.

If you should need additional information relative to NHDOT's overall support of this CRISI application, please feel free to contact me via phone (603-271-2449) or email ([Michelle.L.Winters@dot.nh.gov](mailto:Michelle.L.Winters@dot.nh.gov)).

Sincerely,



Michelle L. Winters  
Director, Division of Aeronautics, Rail & Transit