



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 Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Company (LARC), a railroad established and jointly owned by the cities of Lewiston and Auburn, 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 a railroad founded through public private partnerships, we are excited by the collaborative nature of this project between the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad (SLR) and the states of Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire.

The LARC corridor was built as a direct connection for the movement of people and goods between our community and the Grand Trunk line between Portland, ME and Montreal, later the Canadian National and now the SLR. Our owners, the cities of Lewiston and Auburn, continue to focus new investment on the potential of rail connections to expand industrial and distribution-based economic development. Over the last decade, over \$3 million has been invested in the LARC corridor and close to 1,000 acres of industrially zoned land remains available. With that said, LARC's corridor remains dependent on the SLR corridor remaining competitive nationally.

After decades of investment in the SLR corridor by the State of Maine and the SLR, this grant proposal 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 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 the region at a competitive disadvantage and limits opportunities for employment growth in sectors known to be higher wage.

On behalf of the LARC Board of Directors, and our shareholders in Lewiston and Auburn, we ask that you give this CRISI grant application serious consideration for selection and award.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan P. LaBonte
President
Lewiston-Auburn Railroad Company