



395 John Ireland Boulevard  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

December 1, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, Southeast  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Letter of Support: Highway 371/210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is pleased to apply for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. Along with the State of Minnesota's commitment of \$500,000, an award of CRISI funding would allow us to complete environmental documentation and preliminary engineering for the Highway 371/210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project.

The intersection of Hwy 371 and Hwy 210 ranks as the 14th highest crash cost intersection in Minnesota, which is more than three times the critical crash rate. The intersection is further complicated by the at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway crossing of Hwy 371 immediately south of Hwy 210.

MnDOT District 3 spans a large swath of central Minnesota – a diverse mix of both rapidly urbanizing communities along Interstate 94, from the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area (MSP) and rural communities in the north, extending past Brainerd/Baxter and including the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation. The project is critically important to District 3's regional economy as it supports key industries and consumers in the Brainerd/Baxter region and across the state.

This project will provide safe, unimpeded, rail-separated access between Hwy 371 and the commercial district, significantly decreasing existing conflicts and risks for the railroad and highways and allow for planned growth on the line. The grade separation of Hwy 371 and BNSF Railway would also account for safe, ADA compliant multimodal connections and access improvements along the project corridor. This will strengthen our system of transport and contribute to growth in our region.

Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration. Thank you for your interest and support to improve Minnesota's transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Nancy Daubenberger'.

Nancy Daubenberger, P.E.  
Commissioner