



November 7, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project, Baxter, MN

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the entire Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners, I am writing to support the Minnesota Department of Transportation's application for federal funding through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program.

The junction of State Highway (Hwy) 371 and Hwy 210 plays an important role in this County's overall transportation and freight network. Over the last two decades this intersection has experienced large increases in traffic demand and corresponding challenges related to elevated levels of crashes and congestion. With well over 50,000 vehicles utilizing this facility each day, it has been classified as the busiest at-grade intersection in central region of Minnesota. It also ranks among the very highest in the state as it relates to the total cost of crashes that occur each year. Among the complicating factors is the location of an at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad crossing less than 300 feet south of the intersection of this two high-volume state highways.

Over the last several years, Crow Wing County and its agency partners have worked closely to raise awareness of this challenging intersection and its complicating factors. A preliminary engineering review completed in 2022 revealed a range of feasible grade-separated alternatives able to improve the failing intersection and eliminate the challenging railroad crossing. The in-depth engineering and environmental review needed to identify and design a specific solution is critically important to our county and the entire central lakes region of Minnesota.

Crow Wing County is fully supportive of MnDOT's effort to seek funding assistance to advance this important project. I ask that you give MnDOT's application for federal CRISI funding your full attention and favorable consideration.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact the Crow Wing County Engineer, Timothy Bray. He can be reached by phone (218) 822-2684 or by email tim.bray@crowwing.us.

Sincerely,

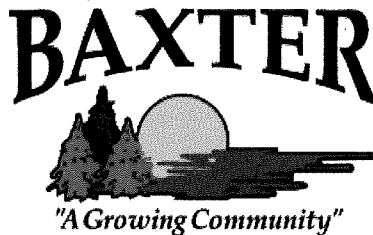
Douglas Houge
Chairman
Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners

County Commissioners
Paul Koering – District 1
Bill Brekken – District 2
Steve Barrows – District 3
Rosemary Franzen – District 4
Doug Houge – District 5

Historic Courthouse
326 Laurel Street, Suite 13
Brainerd, MN 56401

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Fax: (218) 824-1054
www.crowwing.us

Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.
Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.
Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.



November 16, 2002

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project, Baxter, MN

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the City of Baxter City Council, we are writing this letter as an illustration of the City's support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 3's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate project development under Track 2 for Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project. The intersection of Highway (Hwy) 371 and Hwy 210 is recognized as the busiest at-grade intersection in central Minnesota and ranks 14th on MnDOT's most recent statewide list of highest crash cost intersections. The intersection is further complicated by the at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad 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 in the southern portion around St. Cloud and extending 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 as well as consumers in the Brainerd/Baxter region and across the state.

The project will complete environmental documentation and preliminary engineering for highway improvements and an overpass over the rail line to allow for the closure of the current at-grade crossing. It will provide safe, unimpeded, rail-separated access between Hwy 371 and the commercial district, significantly decreasing existing conflicts and risks for the railroad and the highways, as well as allow for planned growth on the line. The planning work on this project will align with the USDOT's strategic goals of improving safety, strengthening economy and enhancing competitiveness

of the region and the state, providing equitable access, developing sustainable climate solutions, and transforming the transportation system to serve present and future needs.

Hwys 371 and 210 play an integral role in the economic strength/growth of the City of Baxter and the Brainerd Lakes Area. These roads provide direct routes to the ports in Duluth and the transportation hub of the Twin Cities, as well as serve as the artery of the local retail/tourism industry. Grade separation of Hwy 371 and BNSF railway would assure the two highways continue to serve their role as an economic engine for the region and do so in a manner that is safe and ADA compliant for all modes of transportation. It would also improve access along the project corridor and contribute to growth in our region, including the anticipated growth of the City of Baxter itself.

We support MnDOT's application for the funding of Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if we can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We may be reached at 218-454-5100.

Sincerely,



Darrel Olson
Mayor



Bradley Chapulis
City Administrator

November 21, 2022
Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590



www.ci.brainerd.mn.us

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project, Baxter, MN

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Brainerd City Council is writing in support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 3's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate project development under Track 2 for Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project. The intersection of Highway (Hwy) 371 and Hwy 210 is recognized as the busiest at-grade intersection in central Minnesota and ranks 14th on MnDOT's most recent statewide list of highest crash cost intersections. The intersection is further complicated by the at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad 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 in the southern portion around St. Cloud and extending 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 as well as consumers in the Brainerd/Baxter region and across the state.

The project will complete environmental documentation and preliminary engineering for highway improvements and an overpass over the rail line to allow for the closure of the current at-grade crossing. It will provide safe, unimpeded, rail-separated access between Hwy 371 and the commercial district, significantly decreasing existing conflicts and risks for the railroad and the highways, and allow for planned growth on the line. The planning work on this project will align with the USDOT's strategic goals of improving safety, strengthening economy and enhancing competitiveness of the region and the state, providing equitable access, developing sustainable climate solutions, and transforming the transportation system to serve present and future needs.

In coordination with MnDOT and the City of Brainerd's upcoming Hwy 210/Washington Street Reconstruction Project, these two corridor projects will significantly improve the ability for travelers to access the Brainerd area more safely and efficiently. 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, including the anticipated growth of the City of Brainerd itself.



www.ci.brainerd.mn.us

I support MnDOT's application for the funding of Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the City of Brainerd. You may reach Administration at (218) 828-2307.

Sincerely,

Dave Badeaux

Mayor

City of Brainerd City Council



Washington Educational
Services Building
804 Oak Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
Phone: (218) 454-6900
Fax: (218) 454-5549
www.isd181.org

November 7, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad
Grade Separation Project, Baxter, MN

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 3's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate project development under Track 2 for Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project. The intersection of Highway (Hwy) 371 and Hwy 210 is recognized as the busiest at-grade intersection in central Minnesota and ranks 14th on MnDOT's most recent statewide list of highest crash cost intersections. The intersection is further complicated by the at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad 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 in the southern portion around St. Cloud and extending 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 as well as consumers in the Brainerd/Baxter region and across the state.

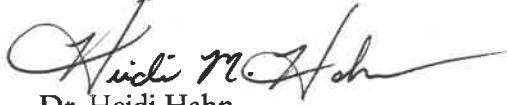
The project will complete environmental documentation and preliminary engineering for highway improvements and an overpass over the rail line to allow for the closure of the current at-grade crossing. It will provide safe, unimpeded, rail-separated access between Hwy 371 and the commercial district, significantly decreasing existing conflicts and risks for the railroad and the highways, and allow for planned growth on the line. The planning work on this project will align with the USDOT's strategic goals of improving safety, strengthening economy and enhancing competitiveness of the region and the state, providing equitable access, developing sustainable climate solutions, and transforming the transportation system to serve present and future needs.

This is a major thoroughfare for the community and greatly impacts the bussing of students for our school district. Any improvements to this intersection would positively improve the transportation

and ensure better safety of all the students attending school at Brainerd Public Schools. 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, including the anticipated growth of Brainerd Public Schools itself.

I support MnDOT's application for the funding of Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at 218-454-6916 or by emailing Heidi.Hahn@isd181.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heidi M. Hahn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Heidi Hahn
Superintendent of Schools
Brainerd Public Schools



November 5, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project, Baxter, MN

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 3's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate project development under Track 2 for Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project. The intersection of Highway (Hwy) 371 and Hwy 210 is recognized as the busiest at-grade intersection in central Minnesota and ranks 14th on MnDOT's most recent statewide list of highest crash cost intersections. The intersection is further complicated by the at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad 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 in the southern portion around St. Cloud and extending 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 as well as consumers in the Brainerd/Baxter region and across the state.

The project will complete environmental documentation and preliminary engineering for highway improvements and an overpass over the rail line to allow for the closure of the current at-grade crossing. It will provide safe, unimpeded, rail-separated access between Hwy 371 and the commercial district, significantly decreasing existing conflicts and risks for the railroad and the highways, and allow for planned growth on the line. The planning work on this project will align with the USDOT's strategic goals of improving safety, strengthening economy and enhancing competitiveness of the region and the state, providing equitable access, developing sustainable climate solutions, and transforming the transportation system to serve present and future needs.

This project is an important corridor for commerce goals identified in the regions Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which is a regional 5-year plan created through an extensive civic engagement process.

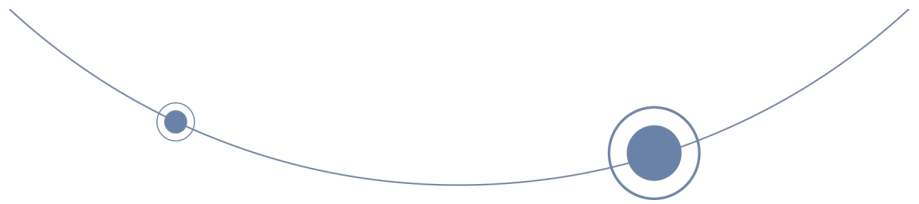
The grade separation of Hwy 371 and BNSF railway would also account for safe, ADA compliant multimodal connections and access improvements along the project corridor. This will strengthen our system of transport and contribute to growth in our region, including the anticipated growth of Region Five Development Commission itself, given our secondary offices located on Hwy 371.

Bridging Relationships & Resources

200 1st Street NE Suite 2, Staples, MN 56479 | 218.894.3233 | regionfive.org



REGION FIVE
Development Commission



I support MnDOT's application for the funding of Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at chills@regionfive.org or 218-270-0188.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryal Lee Hills".

Cheryal Lee Hills, Executive Director

Bridging Relationships & Resources

200 1st Street NE Suite 2, Staples, MN 56479 | 218.894.3233 | regionfive.org

November 29, 2022

Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 FRA CRISI Program: Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project, Baxter, MN

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 3's application for funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Discretionary Grant Program. The award of CRISI funding would facilitate project development under Track 2 for Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project. The intersection of Highway (Hwy) 371 and Hwy 210 is recognized as the busiest at-grade intersection in central Minnesota and ranks 14th on MnDOT's most recent statewide list of highest crash cost intersections. The intersection is further complicated by the at-grade Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad 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 in the southern portion around St. Cloud and extending 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 as well as consumers in the Brainerd/Baxter region and across the state.

The project will complete environmental documentation and preliminary engineering for highway improvements and an overpass over the rail line to allow for the closure of the current at-grade crossing. It will provide safe, unimpeded, rail-separated access between Hwy 371 and the commercial district, significantly decreasing existing conflicts and risks for the railroad and the highways, and allow for planned growth on the line. The planning work on this project will align with the USDOT's strategic goals of improving safety, strengthening economy and enhancing competitiveness of the region and the state, providing equitable access, developing sustainable climate solutions, and transforming the transportation system to serve present and future needs.

As an EMS Provider, we respond to several crashes at the Hwy 371 and Hwy 210 intersection. This project would certainly make this intersection safer. 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.

I support MnDOT's application for the funding of Hwy 371/Hwy 210/BNSF Railroad Grade Separation Project and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 CRISI funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at 218-829-8767.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Lee', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Lee

District Chief

North Memorial Ambulance