

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write in strong support of the application submitted by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Fiscal Year 2024 Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) for the Danbury Branch Grade Crossing Engagement, Planning, and Consolidation Program project to study alternative options and develop preliminary engineering plans for the consolidation of crossings on the Metro-North Railroad's (MNR) Danbury Branch in Norwalk and Danbury, Connecticut.

CTDOT, in partnership with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and Metro-North Railroad (MNR), seeks \$2,400,000 to perform the study and plan development activities. The ultimate purpose of this grant request is to develop a project that achieves the objective of eliminating the Taylor Avenue grade crossing and significant safety improvements at Triangle Street and Commerce Avenue.

Recent grade crossing safety assessments and diagnostic team evaluations at the proposed locations have identified the need for additional study to develop alternative options to consolidate grade crossings and improve grade crossing safety for the remaining crossings. A 2023 fatal crash at the Commerce Street crossing has also elevated the need for the study.

The Devine Brothers, Commerce, Triangle, and Taylor Street crossings on the Danbury Line have been identified as significant safety concerns, ranking respectfully as having the first, fourth, and tenth highest predicted accident rates of any crossings on MNR in the state of Connecticut. Safety and connectivity along Connecticut's transportation system are two of CTDOT's foremost priorities. The provision of pathways along which travelers can safely reach everyday residential and business destinations within their communities is essential to the quality of life and retention of Connecticut citizens and businesses. This project will enhance the movement of people and goods throughout the project area and foster connections between people and their destinations that are safe, reliable, and efficient.

We commend the efforts by the Connecticut Department of Transportation to enhance safety and bolster connectivity in the state. Therefore, we support the submitted application and request your full and fair consideration of the proposal.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



JAHANA HAYES
Member of Congress