

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 31, 2013

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write in support of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA) application for funding through the U. S. Department of Transportation's 2013 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER V) grant program. This collaborative effort between SEPTA and CSX is designed to alleviate the impact of passenger and freight rail interactions on six miles of CSX-owned track in Bucks County, Pennsylvania between Middletown Township and West Trenton, New Jersey. The existing operating agreement and track configuration do not adequately accommodate current conditions or anticipated future growth, and the situation is made more urgent with the impending Positive Train Control (PTC) implementation deadline.

SEPTA and CSX have developed a cost-effective solution that would physically separate SEPTA's West Trenton Regional Rail Line from CSX freight service in an area that has become a chokepoint for both passenger and freight rail service. With current volume already nearing capacity, the separation project will provide much needed passenger and freight congestion relief. The West Trenton Regional Rail Line is SEPTA's third-highest ridership route and ranks fourth in service volume with 57 scheduled weekday passenger trains. As a tenant on the segment, SEPTA will realize specific advantages from the project, including proprietary control of train movements and dispatching, capacity preservation and growth, increased passenger rail speeds, and the ability to make the Yardley and West Trenton Stations ADA accessible at a much lower cost. CSX will directly benefit from enhanced north-south connectivity and improved service to and from the Port of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia region's oil refineries, which are increasingly reliant on this segment for rail service to receive crude oil deliveries and ship refined products to U.S. markets.

The significant technical challenges related to PTC implementation and functionality in shared-track operations have made separation an operational imperative for both SEPTA and CSX. As you are aware, freight and passenger rail PTC technologies are fundamentally different and interoperability remains a formidable challenge. Without separation, the six mile segment on the West Trenton Line will be the only portion of the entire 220-mile SEPTA track network that will not support the Amtrak-compatible PTC technology that the Authority is installing.

SEPTA has continued to update each of our offices on its progress related to PTC implementation. The Authority has assured us that it is still on schedule to implement PTC by the December 31, 2015 deadline. However, in meeting the PTC mandate, SEPTA will divert more than \$300 million away from critical state of good repair projects, including bridge and substation projects in our districts, solely for the installation of PTC and its supporting technologies. The additional, unfunded cost associated with the separation project places SEPTA's good faith commitment to achieving full PTC compliance in jeopardy.

This project will profoundly benefit passenger, freight, and port mobility throughout southeastern Pennsylvania. If separation cannot be completed in conjunction with PTC implementation, however, a valuable opportunity will be missed for passenger and freight rail service to benefit from the technical and operational efficiencies this project affords. SEPTA's separation project is consistent with the goals Congress established when creating the TIGER program, and it clearly meets the urgency, economic competitiveness, safety and project readiness criteria the Department is emphasizing in the 2013 application. We respectfully request your full and fair consideration of this application for funding to assist with this critical project.

Sincerely,


Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-PA)


Senator Patrick J. Toomey (R-PA)

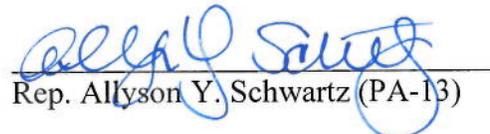

Rep. Robert A. Brady (PA-01)


Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-02)


Rep. Jim Gerlach (PA-06)


Rep. Patrick Meehan (PA-07)


Rep. Michael G. Fitzpatrick (PA-08)


Rep. Allyson Y. Schwartz (PA-13)