

**Remarks Prepared for FRA Administrator Amit Bose  
Annual Meeting of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission  
(MIPRC)  
Indianapolis, IN  
Thursday, November 17, 2022**

Good morning.

It is great to be back here in the Midwest and with all of the wonderful people of MIPRC.

Last fall, I had the pleasure of announcing the Midwest Regional Rail Plan alongside MIPRC, and since that time I'm proud to say so much has happened.

This week marks the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure and competitiveness.

To date, the Administration has announced over \$185 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and nearly 7,000 specific projects, reaching over 4,000 communities across all 50 states, D.C., and the territories.

President Biden and Congress provided us the tools to deliver an “infrastructure decade,” and this work is well underway.

This is a transformational moment, and for the first time in decades, rail is in the middle of this progress.

FRA is standing up new grant programs, making never-before-seen funds available to States and stakeholders, and we're committed to doing all this in close collaboration with stakeholders like you.

MIPRC is very much a part of this process. The Midwest has long played a vital role in rail, benefiting regional and national economies.

The Midwest will undoubtedly play a role in our future too.

As I mentioned, FRA has and will make never-before-seen investments available through grant programs like the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety

Improvements, or CRISI, Program and the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program.

These programs have historically invested in the Midwest, like the \$3 million FY19 CRISI award to the Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroads, benefiting freight trains and the South Shore Line commuter service and resulting in more efficient operations from Michigan to Indiana.

This past June, FRA also announced over \$30 million in CRISI funds in Michigan and over \$20 million in Kansas to bolster supply chains and get goods where they need to be faster and safer.

I want to remind you that more than \$1.4 billion in funding is available right now through the CRISI Program. This is more than three times as much as last cycle, providing tremendous opportunities to advance projects that modernize freight and passenger rail infrastructure.

The application period runs until December 1, and I encourage all of you to look at the NOFO before it closes.

While CRISI has historically funded freight improvements and safety projects, such as grade crossing enhancements and rail line relocations and improvements, the program also funds regional rail and corridor planning, environmental analyses, and research and deployment of railroad safety technology.

CRISI funds also support workforce development and training efforts, which is a priority for so many of us right now.

Additionally, the expanded Federal-State Partnership Program is poised to make the most significant investment in 50 years to modernize passenger rail service across the country.

The Partnership Program will see \$7.2 billion in funding over the next five years, allowing us to not only reduce the state of good repair backlog but also to expand and establish new services.

This is an expanded program that has already advanced significant work on major projects in the Midwest.

In September of last year, Metra broke ground on a replacement for the one-hundred-and-twenty-two-year-old A-32 Bridge as well as the reconstruction of Grayland Station.

This project was funded with a \$17.8 million grant through FY19 Partnership Program funds.

Metra, as well as Amtrak, will also benefit from the \$3 million Partnership Program grant that FRA awarded to Chicago Union Station this past August.

And in Michigan, FRA has provided Partnership Program funds for years to rehabilitate and improve infrastructure and assets used by the Kalamazoo-to-Dearborn corridor.

These are just a few examples of what is possible through the almost \$2.3 billion NOFO FRA aims to issue later this month.

This latest Partnership Program NOFO will be the first time that FRA is dedicating funding for intercity passenger rail projects specifically outside the Northeast Corridor.

Thanks to the expanded scope, the NOFO will provide even more opportunities to support intercity passenger rail by funding previously ineligible planning, engineering, and environmental project development activities.

As for the new FRA grant programs established under the infrastructure law, FRA is making significant progress advancing the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, Corridor Identification and Development Program, and Interstate Rail Compact Grant Program.

The Railroad Crossing Elimination Program is one example of a newly-created program addressing a long-standing need not just in the Midwest but also in communities across the country.

Earlier this year, FRA made more than \$573 million available—the first-ever funding through this program—to invest in rail overpasses, underpasses, roadway reconfiguration, and other grade crossing upgrades to make communities safer and increase the mobility of people and goods.

Once complete, these projects will also reduce wait times at railroad crossings and may eliminate the possibility of blocked railroad crossings altogether.

The RCE Program not only supports FRA's number one goal of safety—it will also directly improve the everyday lives of community members experiencing disruptions due to blocked crossings.

We should all be able to get to and from our homes, schools, clinics, businesses, fire stations, and workplaces without being stranded and delayed by a standing train.

The first year of RCE Program applications are being reviewed now. Though I cannot speak about any specific applications while they are being reviewed, all indications suggest that this new program is significantly over-subscribed—reaffirming the importance of this issue.

With the Corridor Identification and Development Program, which FRA established in May, we have an opportunity to develop a national pipeline of projects and build the first federal program to support the sustained, long-term development of intercity passenger rail corridors.

As with the Grade Crossing Elimination Program, the Corridor ID program looks to communities and states to lead the way in defining candidate intercity passenger rail corridors and to determine how the services in those corridors will operate.

FRA is adopting an approach that can accommodate and support a wider range of proposals. We will meet program participants wherever they are in the life cycle of their project.

Nearly any public entity with a role in transportation is eligible for the Corridor ID Program. This includes Amtrak, States or a group of States, entities implementing interstate compacts, regional passenger rail authorities and planning organizations, local governments, and Indian tribes.

Next month, FRA will begin soliciting formal project proposals for the Corridor ID Program—the first in FRA's plan to regularly solicit proposals for new corridors to enter the program.

Ultimately, corridor development must be driven by committed state and local stakeholders.

FRA aims to make Corridor ID the primary means through which we support the planning and implementation of intercity passenger rail services around the country, so your role as a coordinating entity is as important as ever going forward.

As we move into year two of the infrastructure law implementation, you can expect more funding opportunities through FRA's Interstate Rail Compacts Program and Restoration and Enhancement Program early next year.

You should also look to DOT-wide programs such as RAISE, which awarded more than \$2.2 billion dollars this year, with a significant portion dedicated to rail projects across the Midwest.

Projects like the one in Illinois, which further invests in the City of Springfield by constructing a railroad grade separation underpass to reconnect underserved communities to vital services and jobs in the downtown area.

I encourage you all to take advantage of the unprecedented federal support I've outlined, and I encourage you to continue building important partnerships with stakeholders, something MIPRC has done consistently and effectively.

Collaboration is the only way that projects like the Twin Cities to Milwaukee to Chicago service we celebrated in La Crosse, W.I., earlier this year can become a reality. It is the only way that projects as ambitious as the ones on the horizon can move through the planning stages and become a reality.

FRA is committed to being part of this collaboration too.

In addition to providing significant financial support, we are committed to early and proactive engagement with stakeholders, and we continue to build internal capacity for increased technical assistance on projects, planning efforts, grant applications, and more.

This will allow us to help project sponsors produce strong project applications, help us select the highest quality and best value projects, and help facilitate the groundbreaking of as many rail infrastructure projects as quickly as possible.

Later today, Wynne Davis, FRA's Deputy Director for the Office of Outreach, will discuss how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law can benefit rail in the Midwest in more detail.

I hope you will find her detailed presentation informative, and you see it as just one opportunity to engage further.

I will close with where I started: so much positive progress is underway, and so much more is still to come.

By the end of this year, FRA will have made more than \$16 billion in project funding available, while announcing more than 70 project selections in the last six months alone.

The infrastructure law may have been defined by numbers on a page the last time we spoke. But today, we can see down payments being made and projects advancing in local communities.

And I'm confident people across the country—particularly Midwesterners—will feel the benefits in their daily lives for years to come.

Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to our continued partnership.