

**Remarks Prepared for FRA Administrator Amit Bose
Railroad Crossing Elimination Program Announcement
Houston, Texas
Wednesday, June 7, 2023**

It's great to back here in Houston.

I want to thank the city for organizing this event and for your support of the project we're celebrating today.

This is a very good day for Houston and the many people traveling through and living between Runnels Street and Leeland Street.

I know the blocked crossing and grade crossing safety is something the community here has worked very hard to find a solution for.

In many instances we've worked together, and today is a major step forward to increase safety and quality of life.

As Secretary Buttigieg has said multiple times, most of the good ideas don't come from Washington, but more of the funds should...and now they are.

On behalf of the Biden-Harris Administration, I am thrilled to award nearly \$37 million to build four underpasses and construct a 9,000 foot sealed corridor.

The crossings impacted by this award are ones where more than 850 incidents of train blockages have been reported through FRA's online portal this year alone.

The new underpasses will mean there's no possibility of collision between trains and vehicles and no waiting for a train to pass.

That means safer travel for drivers, lots of time back in people's days, faster response times for emergency services, and a higher quality of life.

Houston is too familiar with disruptions and delays at highway-rail crossings, and unfortunately, incidents at grade crossings and reports of blocked crossings remain far too common—not just here but nationwide.

That's why FRA will continue to advance initiatives that decrease the unacceptable status quo of 2,000 grade crossing collisions and more than 200 casualties at crossings each year.

We're going to keep engaging communities and railroads to work together to drive down the more than 30,000 reports of blocked crossings FRA received through our online portal last year.

Here in Texas, that means finding ways to decrease the number of collisions reported in Harris County as well as the reports of blocked crossings throughout State, which rank second and first respectively nationwide.

Thanks to President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, we're funding new infrastructure to address these challenges through this first-ever federal program dedicated to eliminating railroad crossings.

We're awarding five grants in Texas, totaling nearly \$87 million, the highest total amount to a single state.

In Fort Worth, where I was yesterday, we're investing more than \$17 million to help construct a four-lane grade-separated road and eliminate a crossing that has prevented or slowed drivers and pedestrians from getting where they need to be.

We're building an overpass in San Antonio to decrease wait times for drivers and improve supply chain fluidity. We're funding another in Amarillo for a five-lane arterial road over a rail line. And, we're eliminating two grade crossings and building a bridge in Dayton, Texas.

In total, we're awarding \$570 million to 63 projects nationwide, impacting approximately 400 crossings in 32 States.

And with \$3 billion in RCE Program funds available over five years, more improvements are coming.

This is true through future rounds of the RCE Program as well as several other FRA competitive grant programs, such as our Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program, or CRISI for short, which is slated to award more than \$1.4 billion in the coming months to projects that enhance safety and get people and goods where they need to be.

But again, today is about celebrating the Phase 1 West Belt Improvement Project right here in Houston. Even with this new program and the unprecedented investments in the infrastructure law, we still received requests for about four times more funding than we were able to say yes to in this round of RCE.

So, I want to congratulate you all again for your very strong application in this competitive program.

Today is another example of how we're Investing in America and delivering the commonsense things people have been asking for and deserve – and we're just getting started.

Thanks again, and congratulations.