

**Remarks Prepared for FRA Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell
USDOT Transportation and Climate Symposium Opening Plenary Session
Washington, DC
Friday, July 12, 2024**

Rail is already an environmentally friendly mode of transportation.

The transportation sector emits the highest amount of greenhouse gas emissions of all the U.S. sectors, while the rail sector contributing 2% of those emissions.

Rail is playing a key role in reducing emissions. We are pushing to do more.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, FRA established its first ever Climate and Sustainability Program to coordinate existing and implement new outreach, research, and initiatives.

The goal being to assist the rail industry in reducing emissions, building resiliency, and developing an even more sustainable rail network.

Under this Administration, FRA is also investing in new innovative technologies, supporting rail expansion planning and funding new infrastructure that will help reduce pollution.

This includes supporting research and testing at FRA's Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo, CO, where safety testing of the Stadler zero-emission multiple-unit (ZEMU) hydrogen fuel cell trainset for the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority occurred.

The trainset traveling more than 1,700 miles without refueling or recharging, which set a distance record for a hydrogen fuel cell train.

FRA is also helping to get new zero emission locomotive technologies such as hydrogen fuel cell and battery-electric locomotives into use.

Notably, FRA's CRISI Program is making it possible to replace dirty locomotives with cleaner.

Last year's CRISI grants funded the purchase of 15 batter-electric switcher locomotives that will significantly reduce air and noise pollution in and around rail yards.

This first-ever investment in new, zero-emission locomotive technologies is a major boost to the U.S. locomotive manufacturing industry.

The newest round of CRISI applications is under review right now, which present an opportunity to invest even further in zero-emission locomotive technology.

In addition to CRISI grants, new and vastly expanded FRA programs made possible by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are also investing in sustainability.

Fed State-National and Corridor ID are expanding and improving America's passenger rail network.

That's good for travelers, good for communities and the air they breathe, and good for the Earth.

Last year, FRA recently announced 69 planning grants across 44 states through our Corridor ID Program. Passenger rail corridors for future development include upgrading 15 existing rail routes, adding or extending service on 47 new routes, and advancing 7 new high-speed rail projects.

The climate benefits associated with proposed HSR corridors are particularly exciting. Corridors like the one to connect Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland with a future extension south to Eugene, Oregon. The corridor to connect Dallas and Houston. The corridor to connect Atlanta to Charlotte, linking the Southeast and providing connection to Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, the busiest airport in the world.

At the same time, grants through FRA's Fed State-National Program are investing in projects that will providing Americans with a safe and reliable alternative to congested highways.

This month, Secretary Buttigieg broke ground on a new rail route from Raleigh, NC, to Richmond, VA. Funded by a \$1.1 billion FRA Fed State-National grant, the route will provide new service between NC and VA--service that will be faster than car and save passengers an estimated 90 minutes per trip compared to current route.

HSR is also moving forward in California's Central Valley, which will use new all-electric trainsets that will produce zero emissions and be powered by 100% renewable energy.

Looking ahead, FRA, DOE and EPA will be releasing The Rail Action Plan later this year, which maps out technologies that can transform the rail industry to meet net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

FRA remains committed to investing in new technologies and advancing research and we will continue to utilize the President's infrastructure investments to grow America's rail network and ensure rail is contributing to a greener future.