

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

May 17, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20509

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to support Watco's application for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration.

Watco's proposal will help to complete the preliminary engineering and design work, including National Environmental Policy Act analysis, of a large scale systemwide bridge project to rehabilitate 116 railroad bridges across the Watco network. 22 of these railroad bridges are located in Wisconsin in the communities of New London, Appleton, Center Valley, Wausau, Brokaw, Merrill, Tomahawk and Bradley. Completion of preliminary engineering and design plans will position Watco to develop a construction scope of work that will identify capital needs, costs, schedule, and maintenance plans to reach industry standards of gross weight on rail.

According to Watco, all 116 railroad bridges included in the project have suffered through years of deferred maintenance from the previous owners/operators and are currently under restricted weight loadings. The bridges also experience random and regular service interruptions to rail service across the Watco network, including in Wisconsin. Per Watco, if these bridges were to fail, rail service could be impacted for an indefinite period of time and there could be widespread consequences to our transportation and agricultural industries.

I strongly support proposals that invest in our transportation infrastructure and benefit our economy. For this reason, I respectfully request that full and fair consideration be given to Watco's CRISI application. Please keep my office updated on the progress of this application by email at projects_grants@baldwin.senate.gov. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator