



May 20, 2024

The Honorable Amit Bose, Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: Watco's 2023/2024 CRISI Grant Program Application: "Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project"**

Dear Administrator Bose:

On behalf of Biewer Wisconsin Sawmill, Inc., I want to extend my full support for Watco's *2023/2024 CRISI Grant Application – Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project*. This project proposes to complete at least 30% preliminary engineering and design work, including all environmental work, for 116 straight railroad bridges that traverse waterways across the entire Watco network. These bridges are critical to safe and efficient railroad service to our facility.

Biewer Wisconsin Sawmill, Inc. is a softwood lumber mill located in Prentice, WI, around 30% of our annual production ships via rail. We also have a sister plant to the sawmill, John A Biewer Company of Wisconsin, Inc. that procures 200 railcars per year of inbound material from the southern US, to treat and distribute to independent lumber yards in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Michigan. We have a fleet of log cars that we utilize to bring logs into our sawmill facility for processing. In addition to the above mentioned freight movements, we produce a natural by product during our milling process (wood chips) that are utilized in the pulp industry in Wisconsin. When we produce these wood chips, we load around 30% of the monthly production into chip gondolas, and ship that material interstate to the pulp mill.

Further weight restrictions and/or rail service disruptions due to the condition of the bridge(s) that serve our facility would severely impact the economics of our business model and would result in more truck traffic navigating local roads through business, commercial and residential areas of our plant. I understand Watco is applying for a federal CRISI grant of \$15.2M and will be providing a local match of \$3.8M if awarded. I applaud Watco for taking this big step forward in trying to address its' infrastructure challenges today and in the future.

Biewer Wisconsin Sawmill, Inc. and John A Biewer of Wisconsin, Inc supports modern infrastructure that helps our economy and enhances the safety of the communities we call home, and certainly supports this CRISI grant application.

Respectfully,

Shannon Kita  
Chief Operations Office