



May 15, 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;

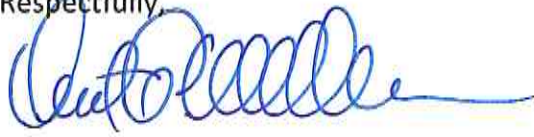
On behalf of The Monarch Cement Company, I want to extend my full support for Watco's 2023/2024 CRISI Grant Application - *Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project*. This project proposes to complete at least 30% preliminary engineering and design work, including all environmental work,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

The Monarch Portland Cement Company – predecessor of The Monarch Cement Company – was founded in 1908 in Humboldt, KS, with the goal of producing the highest quality portland cement for its customers. Manufactured from some of the earth's most common minerals – limestone and shale – portland cement is combined with stone, sand, and water to create a chemical reaction that becomes concrete. Monarch relies heavily on the railroad to supply fuel and raw materials needed to produce portland cement, as well as shipment of finished cement products to terminals and customers.

Further weight restrictions and/or rail service disruptions due to the condition of the bridge(s) that serve our facility(s) 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 to reach 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.

The Monarch Cement Company supports modern infrastructure that helps our economy grow and enhances the safety of the communities we call home, and certainly supports this CRISI grant application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kent A. Webber", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kent A. Webber  
President  
The Monarch Cement Company