



Suzanne Loomis, P.E.
City Engineer/Director of Public Works

May 17, 2024

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

sloomis@newtonkansas.com
316-284-6020

201 E. Sixth St.
Newton, Kansas 67114

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

Dear Administrator Bose:

On behalf of The City of Newton, Kansas, I want to extend our support for Watco's 2023/2024 CRISI Grant Application - *Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project*.

The City of Newton, Kansas has appreciated working with Watco on many projects since they operate on rail lines that pass through our city. We understand that a few of the 116 strategic railroad structures slated for improvements via this application are within our community and we are especially supportive of these upgrades to continue safe uninterrupted service to Newton area businesses and all customers within our region.

Newton has a long-standing history with the railroad industry and our current industrial businesses require great partnership from Watco directly. Newton continues to promote industrial growth in our community and weight restrictions and/or rail service disruptions due to the condition of the bridge(s) that serve our industrial park and local facilities would severely impact the economics of our region. Without the ability to move large heavy product via the Watco rail lines we would see more truck traffic on local roads through business and commercial areas and that would be structurally degrading to our local road system requiring more local funding and it would decrease the safety conditions for local traffic. Watco's application for a federal CRISI grant of \$15.2M and their local match of \$3.8M if awarded would be money well spent to save local transportation system failure.

The City of Newton, Kansas supports modern infrastructure that helps our economy grow and enhances the safety of our town like that included in this CRISI grant application.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Loomis, P.E.
City Engineer/Director Public Works