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September 24, 2014

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Senator
United States Senate, Illinois
230 South Dearborn, Suite 3800
Kluczynski Federal Building
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Senator Durbin:

We are writing to follow up on our letter dated June 20, 2014, urging you to support a robust, long-term transportation reauthorization bill. Since then, Congress has extended the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act through May 31, 2015. While we continue to advocate for the reauthorization principles approved by the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee in June 2014, we wanted to direct your attention at this time to a number of rail transportation issues affecting northeastern Illinois.

Over a billion tons of freight worth over \$3 trillion move through the Chicago region each year, underpinning a national freight system that drives economic growth and improves quality of life for both businesses and consumers. But, the system requires upgrades to address safety and congestion needs.

Several recent train derailments across North America, coupled with the sharp growth in crude oil-by-rail shipments, have underscored the need to focus on rail safety. We are particularly aware of this issue, given the dozens of crude-oil trains that travel through the region each week. We support a strong federal commitment to rail safety. We encourage the federal government to promote rail safety through policies such as revised tank-car standards, updated operational procedures, and requiring assistance for local emergency response efforts.

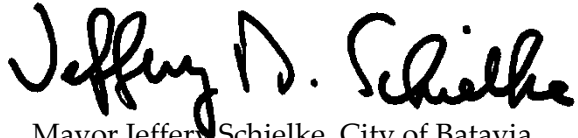
We also encourage greater support through increased federal funding to help communities upgrade infrastructure in response to the growth in freight rail traffic. Given the Chicago region's role as the nation's preeminent rail hub, the 283 communities we represent bear the brunt of grade-crossing delays, noise, and other negative externalities of rail operations – all of which substantially impact our residents' quality of life. The benefits of increased rail activity are felt nationally, but the costs are concentrated locally in our communities.

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We have extensive experience in rail safety issues, and a firsthand understanding of the community impacts of freight. We look forward to working with you to address these pressing concerns and support a robust regional freight network.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jeffrey Schielke, City of Batavia
Chairman, Council of Mayors Executive Committee



Mayor Leon Rockingham, Jr., City of North Chicago
1st Vice Chair, Council of Mayors Executive Committee



Mayor Eugene Williams, Village of Lynwood
2nd Vice Chair, Council of Mayors Executive Committee

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Enclosure