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# United States Senate

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May 19, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of the application submitted by the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) to the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair grant program. NNEPRA's *Downeaster Corridor Track Improvement Project* seeks to improve the reliability, safety, and timeliness of the Amtrak Downeaster by improving track conditions from Brunswick, Maine, to the Massachusetts state line.

This project proposes to replace up to 124,000 deteriorated wooden ties between Brunswick and Massachusetts. This will benefit a critical section of the Downeaster corridor, which provides connectivity for Mainers to points south, including Boston, Massachusetts. These improvements would reduce the need for speed restrictions along the corridor which have caused delays for rail passengers throughout the region.

NNEPRA seeks \$26,814,400, to be combined with a private match of \$6,703,600, for a total project cost of \$33,518,000. This application represents a strong partnership between NNEPRA with Amtrak, CSX Transportation, and other federal, state, and local stakeholders. Improvements stand to benefit both the overall system performance and Maine's access to regional economic markets.

Thank you for your time and effort on behalf of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority. I urge your careful consideration of its application, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify me, or your staff notify Trevor Hustus at (202) 224-2523, when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator