



02/09/2022

Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Administrator Bose:

The Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS) would like to submit the intercity passenger rail corridor between Dubuque, Iowa, and Rockford, Illinois, for consideration in the Corridor Identification and Development Program, as published in the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA's) May 13, 2022, Federal Register notice: Docket No. FRA-2022-0031.

DMATS is a tri-state Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) located at the boundary intersections of the states of Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. As the MPO, we work closely with regional, state, and federal partners to plan transportation projects that will increase mobility, improve safety, and reduce congestion.

The DMATS has completed a feasibility analysis for the implementation of competitive intercity passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois, and Dubuque, Iowa, as a potential way to meet the evolving transportation needs of eastern Iowa and northwestern Illinois, including growing urbanization; changes in traditional employment sectors; a surge in personal travel; an expanded global economy; increasing construction, maintenance, and fuel costs; and climate change awareness. The proposed service would support regional goals such as providing reliable and convenient alternative transportation options, reducing highway congestion and associated emissions, facilitating economic growth, catalyzing development, improving access between communities, and promoting connectivity with other transportation modes.

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is conducting a study to implement intercity passenger rail service between Chicago and Rockford. Initiation of the Chicago to Rockford study motivated the formation of a Passenger Rail Committee (PRC) and the commissioning of this feasibility study to evaluate a potential extension of the proposed Chicago to Rockford service to Dubuque.

The Dubuque, Iowa, and Rockford, Illinois, intercity rail corridor endpoints connect Chicago, Illinois, to Rockford, Illinois, and regional rail, providing connectivity to historically unserved, underserved, low-income, suburban, and rural communities throughout Northwestern Illinois. The integrated connectivity of this passenger rail network creates mutual benefits for all rail services within the region, enhancing regional equity and geographic diversity of intercity rail services.

DMATS is pleased to have the opportunity to submit an expression of interest for the intercity passenger rail corridor and looks forward to working with the FRA on the development of future rail corridors. For additional information or questions, please contact Chandra Ravada at (563) 556 4166 Ext 230 or cravada@ecia.org.

Sincerely,

Brad Cavanagh, Chairperson
DMATS Policy Committee