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METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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November 10, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to support the ***Raleigh to Richmond (R2R) Corridor Infrastructure Engineering & Safety Program*** application for the Federal Rail Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program for fiscal year 2021. The Program is a joint venture between the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA).

The intent of the program is to advance the development of the federally designated Southeast Corridor by providing preliminary engineering for infrastructure rehabilitation and construction of the S-Line which will support expanded high-performance intercity rail service from Raleigh, North Carolina to Richmond, Virginia. The program will also immediately address safety concerns through construction of an important grade separation on the active S-Line in North Carolina's rapidly developing Wake County.

Overall, the program has both local and multi-regional benefits as it directly effects eight counties (Warren, Vance, Franklin, Wake, Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Chesterfield) across the two states. It spans approximately 162 miles of both rural and urban areas across the states and will build upon previous federal and state investments made through environmental research and documentation of the Southeast Corridor as well as both North Carolina and Virginia's acquisition of the S-Line. This step of incremental engineering prepares the regions for future development along the rail line that will provide economic development and job growth to underserved communities and other areas within the states. It will also allow the realization of planning of future interstate rail infrastructure and service development partnerships that have been established through the Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High Speed Rail Compact.

Thank you for your consideration of the *R2R Corridor Infrastructure Engineering & Safety Program*.

Sincerely,

Wendy Jacobs, Chair
DCHC MPO Board