

June 22, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I represent New Hampshire Business for Rail Expansion, a statewide, nonpartisan coalition of more than 100 businesses committed to expanding passenger rail from Boston to southern New Hampshire. Our coalition is comprised of a range of businesses – from local coffee shops to global technology companies – unified by a single mission – expanding rail access to our citizens.

We have worked for several years to support rail expansion, because we believe that it will grow, diversify and strengthen New Hampshire's economy.

New Hampshire is facing a crisis. During the next 20 years, the state's working age population will decrease by 7.3% and the percentage of our state's population age 65 and older will double in every county. This lack of in-migration and aging workforce is already having a negative impact on employers who are unable to attract talented professionals.

For companies to grow and prosper right here in NH, they need access to a younger, highly-educated workforce. That means the state needs to be able to retain its homegrown talent, while at the same time drawing on Boston's vast talent pool. An expanded rail system makes this possible.

Passenger rail can play a key role in New Hampshire's economic future. A recent study identified that rail expansion would generate thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions of dollars in real estate development and it attracts and retains young talent.

In order for our economy to continue to thrive, we must have a truly multimodal approach to transportation. That's why I am writing to convey my support of an application being submitted by the City of Manchester, NH for a FY 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant for the South Millyard area of Manchester.

The RAISE grant will provide a transformative opportunity for investment in intermodal connectivity for the movement of people and goods at the center of Manchester. Over the past ten years the South Millyard has begun evolving into a vibrant area of mixed uses and economic growth. However, this ongoing growth is now constrained by an outdated and disconnected transportation network.

We believe the Manchester RAISE project provides an innovative approach to invest in intermodal project that will reweave the lost connections so that this central part of our community can thrive. The project will increase the flow of workers, residents, goods and services and mitigate existing extreme congestion, provide increased transportation choices and safety, create a completely new multi-modal transportation corridor and the opportunity for a Multi-Modal Transportation Hub, create opportunities for infill development of multi-use buildings and improve a major gateway intersection.

I support Manchester's application for a FY 2021 RAISE grant and ask that you give due consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E.J. Powers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

E.J. Powers

New Hampshire Business For Rail Expansion

CC: City of Manchester Department of Public Works