



November 29, 2023

Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), and the hundreds thousands of workers we represent in the passenger rail and building trades sectors, I write to express my support for California High-Speed Rail and Brightline West's applications for federal funding under the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program.

The two project sponsors have demonstrated their commitment to working with transportation labor by reaching important agreements with several labor unions to utilize their respective members in the construction, operation, and maintenance of these high-speed rail lines. High-speed rail meets the criteria of this federal grant program by greatly reducing highway congestion and greenhouse gas emissions through the creation of an environmentally friendly mode of transportation, while creating tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. These projects will deliver high-speed rail to the United States for the first time and revolutionize the way that Americans travel in this country, while setting the standard for workers' rights involving all future high-speed rail projects.

The Project Labor Agreement between the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSRA) and the building trades unions to utilize union workers on the construction side underscores the project's commitment to employing highly-skilled workers and maintaining fair labor standards. The project is already responsible for the creation of over 11,000 jobs, including high-skilled construction jobs and other industry-related work, and is the largest construction project underway in North America. Additionally, the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that CAHSRA reached with 13 rail labor unions for the operation of the trains will bring hundreds of additional good union jobs to the California Central Valley.

Phase 1 of the project will cover 500 miles and run service from San Francisco to the Los Angeles Basin in under three hours. High-speed rail construction is well underway across 119 miles of California's Central Valley and 422 of the 500 miles of high-speed rail planned between L.A. and San Francisco have been environmentally cleared. Upon full completion, the project will stretch 800 miles, extending to Sacramento and San Diego. The zero-emission trains will be 100% powered by renewable energy, reaching speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour.

Similarly, Brightline is the first and only private operator to agree to build, operate, and maintain its 186+ mph high-speed passenger rail system with unionized workers for the Brightline West project from Las Vegas to Southern California. In February 2023, Brightline West and 13 rail labor unions entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to utilize rail workers for the operation and maintenance of the trains. Earlier this year, Brightline also reached an MOU with the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California and Southern Nevada Building Trades Unions for the construction of the project. The project has been environmentally cleared and is preparing to begin construction in the coming months. If funded as requested, the Brightline West High-Speed Rail Project will be scheduled to debut at the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles and

showcase America's ability to build innovative and transformative projects.

Strong Buy America policy is paramount to strengthening domestic supply chains, supporting American workers, and advancing our nation's transportation goals. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires that all federal funding for infrastructure projects—including funding through Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program—must support the purchase of U.S.-made iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials rather than foreign-made materials. Buy America is not only required by law; it's also a tangible demonstration of the Administration's pledge to prioritize the interests of American workers and domestic manufacturing. These two applications will help advance the Buy America goals of this Administration and be a catalyst for a new domestic high-speed rail manufacturing industry.

This is a unique moment in the history of rail transportation in this country. The historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides a record level of funding for passenger rail. The \$16.4 billion investment announced earlier this month for the modernization of the Northeast Corridor shows the potential benefits of the BIL's passenger rail investment. By leveraging this opportunity to fund California High Speed Rail and Brightline West, we can finally meet a decades-long goal of bringing high-speed rail to this country, kick-start a new domestic manufacturing industry, and create tens of thousands of good-paying union jobs. Achieving the above goals is consistent with this Administration's priorities and would be a defining moment for President Biden's legacy.

For the above reasons, we urge you to fully fund the applications of California High-Speed Rail and Brightline West.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Regan', with a circular flourish at the end.

Greg Regan, President  
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO