



September 15, 2026

Byl Herrmann
Interim President
Amtrak

Dear Interim President Herrmann:

On behalf of the Chicago Federation of Labor, which represents 300 labor unions who in turn represent 500,000 working people in Chicago and Cook County and the Transportation Trades Department, the nation's largest transportation labor federation, representing 39 national unions, we write in support of Amtrak's proposed Midwest Maintenance Facility at the Canal Street Yard.

Chicago's role as the nation's passenger-rail hub depends on the workers who inspect, maintain, clean, and prepare trains for service every day. Yet Amtrak's existing Chicago maintenance facilities are aging, undersized, and fragmented. Workers must split trainsets and make multiple inefficient movements just to perform essential work. That makes their jobs harder and creates a bottleneck for the entire passenger-rail system. We cannot expect workers to deliver modern, reliable rail service while asking them to make do with facilities designed for another era.

The proposed facility would provide Amtrak's union workforce with a safer, more modern, and more efficient workplace. Its consolidated, enclosed train shed would allow more maintenance and inspection work to occur indoors, reduce unnecessary train and employee movements, and better meet the demands of today's system. The facility is also expected to support roughly 400 permanent positions for mechanics, electricians, and other skilled rail workers, sustaining family-supporting careers and creating opportunities for the next generation.

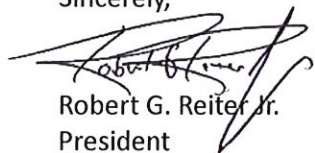
The Midwest Maintenance Facility would also improve service for passengers and strengthen the broader public transportation network our members depend on. We represent both the workers who rely on transit to get to their jobs each day and the workers who operate and maintain Metra, CTA, and Pace services. Our members understand firsthand that a transportation network is only as reliable as the systems and connections that keep it moving. Chicago-based maintenance supports 16 Amtrak routes and more than half of its long-distance trains. Removing bottlenecks here will reduce delays, support ridership growth, and improve reliability across the region and the country.

That goal complements Illinois's recent commitment to a safer, more reliable, and better-connected regional transit system—a commitment our members fought for and won through the passage of the Northern Illinois Transit Authority Act. Amtrak's workforce and facilities are essential parts of that larger transportation network. Modernizing this facility advances the same goals of reliability, service expansion, long-term capital investment, and support for the workers who keep the system moving.

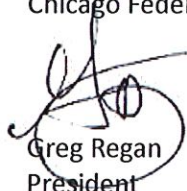
Residents have raised valid questions about nighttime operations, noise, traffic, lighting, emissions, environmental conditions, and the project's design. They deserve clear answers and continued engagement from Amtrak. This dialogue should help shape a better project, not prevent a worthwhile one from moving forward.

Chicago should not have to choose between protecting its neighborhoods, supporting working people, and building a stronger transportation system. The Chicago Federation of Labor supports moving the Midwest Maintenance Facility forward, and we are ready to work with Amtrak, its union workforce, community stakeholders, and public officials to deliver a project that benefits workers, passengers, and the surrounding community.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Reiter Jr.
President
Chicago Federation of Labor



Greg Regan
President
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

cc: The Honorable Tammy Duckworth, United States Senator