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

Re: Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project: Watco's 2023/2024 CRISI Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Norfolk Southern Railway Corporation (Norfolk Southern), I am writing to express our support for Watco's Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project FRA CRISI grant application. This project proposes to complete at least 30% preliminary engineering and design work, including all environmental work, for 116 strategic railroad bridges that traverse waterways across the entire Watco network.

Of the 116 railroad bridges subject of this application, 3 are owned by Norfolk Southern and leased to Watco for short line operations. Further weight restrictions and/or rail service disruptions due to the condition of these bridges would severely impact service levels and weaken the supply chain of freight rail across our nation. Bridges across Watco's network are vital connections to underserved and rural areas. Without this critical investment, current deterioration would accelerate and would result missed economic growth and opportunities throughout Watco's network.

Norfolk Southern believes the projects in this application will yield significant long-term economic and supply-chain resiliency benefits across the United States. I am pleased to express our support for this comprehensive infrastructure project and respectfully request its selection for an FRA CRISI grant.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Lehlbach'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'D'.

David Lehlbach