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May 21, 2024

The Honorable Amit Bose, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

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

Dear Administrator Bose;

On behalf of Bartlett Grain, I want to extend my full support for Watco's 2023/2024 CRISI Grant Application - *Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project*. 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. These bridges are critical to safe and efficient railroad service to our facility(s).

Bartlett Grain owns and operates four grain elevator terminals on Watco's K&O railroad, and operates a flour mill and soybean crush facility on Watco's SKOL railroad. Our investments in these world class facilities depends on reliable and efficient access to markets both domestic and abroad. Watco has been a good transportation partner providing that access and continued investment in vital rail infrastructure is key for our business to reach our customers when and where they need our products.

Further weight restrictions and/or rail service disruptions due to the condition of the bridge(s) that serve our facility(s) would severely impact the economics of our business, model and would result in more truck traffic navigating local roads through business, commercial and residential areas to reach our plant. I understand Watco is applying for a federal CRISI grant of \$15.2M and will be providing a local match of \$3.8M if awarded. I applaud Watco for taking this big step forward in trying to address its' infrastructure challenges today and in the future.

Bartlett Grain supports modern infrastructure that helps our economy grow and enhances the safety of the communities we call home, and certainly supports this CRISI grant application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trent Schairer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Trent Schairer
Vice President – Transportation
Bartlett Grain