

August 15, 2016

Jay Williams  
Assistant Secretary  
Economic Development Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Williams:

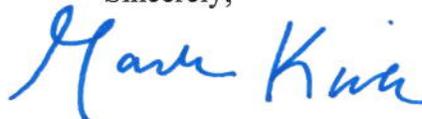
I write in support of the Economic Development Administration Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance application submitted by the City of Rochelle, Illinois for expansion of the City of Rochelle Railroad (CIR). The project would bolster economic activity and industrial development throughout Northern Illinois by opening up 600 acres of land to rail-served industrial development while streamlining rail service throughout the congested region.

The City of Rochelle built the CIR 30 years ago to connect the Class I railroads with local firms throughout the area. Since beginning service, this municipally owned, short line railroad has served as an economic engine, supporting more than \$1 billion in capital investment, 14 different industries, and the creation of more than 2,000 jobs. To build on this effort, Rochelle's Project Co-Op is part of the City of Rochelle's ambitious economic revitalization plan for the area and is key for future development and employment opportunities in north central Illinois.

Specifically, the City of Rochelle's proposed short line rail extension and expansion of the City's current switchyard would allow for thousands of rail cars to be efficiently switched, streamlining freight to and through Chicago. The project would provide much needed relief for other congested traffic areas and spur the development of new rail-served industries while creating jobs and improving quality of life for distressed communities throughout northern Illinois.

I ask that you give this application your most thoughtful and serious consideration. If you should have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Shaun McCabe at my Chicago office at (312) 886-3506.

Sincerely,



Mark Kirk  
United States Senator