



New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

May 28, 2024

Amit Bose  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is pleased to support San Juan County's application for a CRISI grant for a proposed freight railroad connection between the Four Corners region and BNSF Railway's Southern Transcon route. San Juan County will use CRISI grant funds to conduct preliminary engineering and environmental review activities for the proposed freight railroad line. NMDOT commits to ensuring the County will obtain all local match requirements for this grant.

The Four Corners region has not been connected to the national freight railroad system since a narrow-gauge railroad connection to Antonito, Colorado was abandoned more than fifty years ago. Long-distance freight shipments to or from the Four Corners region travel by truck between the Four Corners area and the nearest railroad transloading facilities. The nearest railroad facilities are along the BNSF Transcon, which is more than 100 miles south of Farmington, New Mexico, the largest city in the Four Corners region. Other truck shipments travel nearly 200 miles to rail facilities in the Albuquerque area.

A freight rail connection to the Four Corners region would reduce the cost of shipping goods to and from the Four Corners region. This would benefit existing businesses in the Four Corners region, and help to attract new businesses to the region. Business and government representatives from San Juan County have been evaluating options for constructing a railroad line since 2010. Constructing a freight railroad to The Four Corners region is identified as a priority in the 2014 New Mexico State Rail Plan, developed by NMDOT. In 2024, San Juan County is completing a planning study of this project that includes selecting the preferred alignment for the proposed rail line.

In addition to the economic benefit for the Four Corners region of having a connection to the national rail network, NMDOT will benefit from reducing the number of miles existing freight must travel on New Mexico highways before it is transferred to rail. This freight includes heavy truck shipments of coal from southwestern Colorado trucked to Gallup, New Mexico, and of hydraulic fracturing sand trucked from Gallup to oilfields in San Juan County. The wear and tear from heavy trucks carrying these commodities shortens the lifecycle of the New Mexico highways that carry them.

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**Charles Lundstrom**  
Commissioner, Secretary  
District 6

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

DocuSigned by:  
*Ricky Serna*  
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Ricky Serna,  
Cabinet Secretary