FRANKLIN COUNTY
CONVENTION FACILITIES
AUTHORITY

COLUMBUS

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February 4, 2026

David Fink, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative – Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Program Application

Dear Administrator Fink:

The Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (FCCFA) is pleased to partner with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) on the Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration's Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Program.

FCCFA supports the goals of this application and the advancement of passenger rail planning in Central Ohio and the broader Midwest. In connection with MORPC's application, FCCFA intends to contribute local, non-federal funding in support of preliminary engineering and planning activities related to a future passenger rail station at the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC).

FCCFA anticipates that up to $1.2 million of eligible local expenditures may be applied toward the project's non-federal match requirement, subject to final grant terms, clarification of match timing and reimbursement structure, and approval by the FCCFA Board of Directors. FCCFA's contribution is expected to be sourced from FCCFA funds that are unencumbered and available for eligible planning purposes over the term of the grant.

The FCCFA owns and operates the Greater Columbus Convention Center, Hilton Columbus Downtown Hotel, Nationwide Arena, and associated parking facilities totaling more than 4,500 spaces. Located at the center of the region's convention, tourism, and entertainment district, FCCFA facilities play a critical role in supporting economic development and regional connectivity.

The proposed FSP project aligns with FCCFA's goals of innovation, tourism, and long-term economic prosperity by advancing planning for future intercity passenger rail service in Columbus. Under this initiative, FCCFA would build upon prior station planning efforts to develop preliminary engineering concepts and a scope of work for a potential passenger rail station at the GCCC.

The GCCC occupies the historic site of Union Station, which served Columbus rail passengers from 1850 to 1977, and is uniquely positioned above an existing freight rail corridor. The site is well suited to support future intercity passenger rail service, including the 3C+D passenger rail corridor and the Midwest Connect Corridor ID program.

Previous planning studies have confirmed that vertical circulation between potential future platforms and the Convention Center interior is feasible and compatible with the existing structure. The campus's proximity to hotels, restaurants, residential development, and the Arena District further strengthens its suitability for future passenger rail ridership.

FCCFA looks forward to continued collaboration with MORPC and other partners to strengthen the passenger rail network in Ohio and the Midwest, promote economic development, and improve the safety, reliability, and connectivity of the region's transportation system.

Sincerely,



Kenneth C. Paul, Executive Director
Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority