

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

June 15, 2018

US Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20509

Attn: Ms. Amy Houser
Office of Program Delivery

Dear Ms. Houser,

I strongly support the City of Wilmington, North Carolina's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant application for the planned Wilmington Rail Realignment Project.

The purpose of the project is to relocate the freight use of the Wilmington beltline railroad track. The current route, which connects the Port of Wilmington with the CSX Davis Railyard at Navassa, NC, cuts a circuitous route through the middle of the city and creates a number of logistical problems that could be substantially reduced through realignment. Constructing a new track on the sparsely populated west side of the Cape Fear River would improve rail safety and efficiency, boost economic development for both New Hanover and the surrounding rural counties, and provide health benefits to Wilmington residents.

The route for the realignment would provide a direct route for moving goods to and from the Port. Not only would this eliminate the 'last-mile' delay into the Port, but it would also improve rail line safety. It would relieve road and track conflicts, remove potential rail delays to the regional hospital and level II Trauma Center, and open up freight line access to new industrial sites in nearby Brunswick, Columbus, Bladen, and Pender Counties. Additionally, the new track would provide the military with improved access to the Port. A more direct route for nearby Camp Lejeune and Sunny Point Military Terminal would mean they could avoid transporting goods through populated neighborhoods and commercial areas – a benefit to public safety.

Having already completed a Feasibility Study, the City of Wilmington would use a CRISI grant award to help cover the cost of the NEPA process. This project would provide substantial benefits to the City of Wilmington, the Port of Wilmington, and the surrounding rural communities.

I can only imagine the number of requests you receive, and I greatly appreciate you giving this application every proper and appropriate consideration. If my office can help provide further information or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Perry Chappell at Perry.Chappell@mail.house.gov.

Many thanks in advance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Rouzer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".