



American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

50 F Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20001
aslrra@aslrra.org
www.aslrra.org

Contact:

Amy Krouse

akrouse@aslrra.org

(Cell) 312-371-6947

Short Line Freight Railroads Awarded Industry-Changing Infrastructure Investment in FY 23-24 CRISI Grant Funding

A record \$1.29 billion in CRISI grant funding awarded to 81 short line railroad projects across 36 states

“The CRISI grant program has proven to be transformational to the short line industry. In this combined FY23-24 round, short lines have secured grants that will enable innovative methods of serving customers, drive growth for the freight rail industry and the economy, improve safety and reduce environmental impact. The CRISI grant program, the only grant program for which short lines are directly eligible, is wise public policy that will provide benefits to the interconnected freight rail system and the thousands of communities we serve for decades to come,” says ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker.

WASHINGTON, October 29, 2024 – Today, the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) celebrates the announcement of the Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant awards. The Association offers its congratulations and appreciation to the Congressional leaders that created and funded the CRISI program, the FRA personnel that administer the program and select the awards, and the short line railroaders and their partners that applied for and will receive grant awards.

The record-breaking number of short line projects selected and dollars invested recognizes the plethora of compelling and competitive proposals submitted by the industry. Eighty-one of the 122 projects selected by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) were put forward by short line railroads or their

partners, representing \$1.29B, or about 52% of the dollars awarded. This round of grant funding is the most successful ever for the short line industry, reflecting the reputation that short lines have built as trusted partners for their communities, their customers, and for the FRA.

“Short line railroads are a growth driver of the freight rail industry. FRA’s recognition of the benefits that can be delivered by each dollar invested in these small businesses is evident in the overwhelming success of short line applications in this latest grant cycle,” said Chuck Baker, President of ASLRRRA. “Congress and the FRA can be confident that short lines will put these public dollars to good use, providing new and efficient ways of serving customers, linking small town and rural America to U.S. and international markets, improving and expanding infrastructure that will drive safety improvements, and investing in next-generation technology and locomotives that will reduce the already low environmental impact of rail. For some short lines these awards are utterly transformational, while for others the awards allow them to continue a long journey towards rehabilitating their infrastructure, but for each of them this is a key chapter in their story.”

Short line freight railroads are the first- and last-mile service connections for thousands of industrial, manufacturing, energy, and agricultural shippers across America – particularly in small towns and rural communities. Without modern, safe, and efficient short line rail service, these shippers would risk being cut off from the national freight rail network and global economy – and they would be dependent solely on more expensive, less environmentally friendly transportation. The CRISI grant program makes possible improvements to short line rail infrastructure that will address the number one cause of short line derailments (worn-out track and ties), rehabilitate and upgrade the capacity of older bridges, improve safety at crossings where rail intersects with pedestrians and motor vehicles, prevent trespassing, deploy rail safety technology, and reduce emissions from locomotives.

Among many benefits, this year’s CRISI for short line project awards will address safety:

- 17 projects included grade crossing and trespassing safety elements, such as grade separation, crossing protection enhancements, crossings surface improvements, and measures to reduce trespassing
- 15 projects involve replacing or improving bridges

and decrease the environmental impact of freight rail:

- 10 short line projects will upgrade or purchase 59 locomotives at the Tier 3, Tier 4 or zero emission levels.

Fifty-five of the short line awards will specifically benefit rural areas, where short lines frequently provide the only realistic transportation option for shippers.

The ASLRRRA itself was also selected as an FY23-24 grant recipient. ASLRRRA will receive \$20M to advance data collection and analysis that will benefit the industry. The project includes the development of a national short line data survey process, and, by installing advanced digital on-board systems on more than 600 locomotives, will allow for the collection and analysis of information across short lines, including energy usage, idling, and emission data. The results will be used to support freight rail system operating efficiency, investment, and development.

“FRA and Congress can be assured that the investment that will be made as a result of this round of grants will be immediately felt. \$1.29B is a substantial number, and every dollar will be used to support safety, infrastructure, and service. It is a significant signal of the confidence in the positive impact of short line railroads. However, we will not rest on this milestone, but will be working to ensure that FY25 and FY26 appropriations include the robust additional discretionary funding allowable under the IIJA.”

The FRA reported that there were 271 applicants for the FY23-24 grants, requesting \$7.4B in funding, again making CRISI a highly popular and over-subscribed grant program.

###

About ASLRRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation’s 600 short line and regional railroads and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 47,500 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately 29% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. www.aslrra.org