

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-1303

February 17, 2014

Mr. Donald Orseno  
Executive Director / CEO  
Metra  
547 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60661

Dear Mr. Orseno:

As Illinois' most senior member of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and as a co-chair of the Congressional Public Transportation Caucus, I would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment to the position of Executive Director/CEO at Metra. As you are well aware, the actions of previous senior Metra officials have raised serious concerns about the agency's use of taxpayer dollars and its management practices. Given your experience, I am hopeful that you can put Metra back on track. I am also hopeful that we can work together to ensure the agency provides quality mass transit to the residents of northeastern Illinois. To that end, I write to bring Metra's performance along the BNSF line and the lack of adequate service along the Heritage Corridor to your attention.

Metra's BNSF route accommodates 47 roundtrip trains per day from Aurora to downtown Chicago through my congressional district. The line is by far the most utilized route in Metra's system, with a monthly ridership of approximately 1.3 million. Earlier this week, you appeared before the Illinois General Assembly to explain recent weather-related challenges faced by Metra. Without question, the impact of the system-wide delays this winter cannot be overstated, especially on the BNSF line. Unfortunately, Metra's service on BNSF also lagged throughout parts of the year. In particular, on-time performance along the line dropped to 88.5% in June. Given these issues, many of my constituents believe Metra's service along the line is slipping. One of my highest priorities is to ensure reliable, high quality public transportation in northeastern Illinois. For this reason, I urge you to take measurable steps to improve the reliability of this service and I offer my assistance in working with you to do that.

As you are also aware, another critical priority is addressing the lack of adequate service along the Heritage Corridor. Since 1999, Metra has operated three roundtrip trains per day. During this period of time, the population served by the line has significantly increased. In fact, 2010 Census data shows that Will County is the fastest growing county in the state. Between 2000 and 2010, the populations of Romeoville, Joliet, and Lockport grew by 88%, 39%, and 12%, respectively. Southwest Cook County has also grown over the past 10 years with the populations of Lemont, Willow Springs, and Summit increasing by 22%, 10%, and 4%, respectively. As a result, ridership on the Heritage Corridor has expanded by approximately 25% over the past ten years. For these reasons, I urge you to provide additional service on the line and work with me on behalf of the residents of northeast Will County and southwest Cook County to make it a reality.

Given your career railroad experience, I am hopeful that you will move Metra forward in a positive direction and that we can work together to ensure reliable and adequate Metra service for the residents of the region. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Lipinski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DANIEL LIPINSKI  
Member of Congress