



PURSuing HEALTHY LUNGS AND  
CLEAN AIR FOR ALL

November 29, 2023

Mr. Michael Regan, Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Support for Metra's Green Fleet Initiative / FY2022/23 DERA  
Applications

Dear Administrator Regan:

Respiratory Health Association (RHA) supports Metra's initiative to modernize its infrastructure and assets with low-to-no emissions equipment. For this reason, we strongly support Metra's four discretionary grant applications to the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) National program (RE: Metra's New Electric Locomotive F40 Replacement, Metra's Electric Switch Locomotive, Metra's Tier IV Switch Locomotive, and Metra's Electric Railcar Mover).

The RHA has been a local public health leader since 1906, when tuberculosis was a prominent health threat in our community. As health practices and treatments, medicines, and environmental factors have evolved, so has RHA. Today, the RHA addresses asthma, COPD, lung cancer, tobacco control, and air quality with a comprehensive approach. RHA has been especially focused on reducing emissions from diesel engines because of the disproportionate health risk it creates in low income and minority communities.

In 2019 alone, the transportation sector in the Chicago region accounted for over 29,000,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide in the area, approximately 32 percent of the region's entire emissions output. These emissions are not only harmful to the planet. The climate disruptions they drive and the co-pollutants those sources emit harm the respiratory health of people living in the region. With the support of DERA funding, Metra can pursue revolutionary technology that will improve air quality in environmentally disadvantaged neighborhoods. This will include the implementation of zero-emissions locomotives and changing unregulated diesel-powered vehicles at Metra's railyards within densely populated neighborhoods to cleaner ones, improving air quality for those living near the railyards.

We understand that low-emission diesel and electric switchers will support Metra's operations at Metra's 47th Street railyard and replace aging switch locomotives that have been in service well beyond their effective lifespan. At Metra's Western Avenue Coach Yard, a zero-emissions railcar mover

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will ensure that moving railcars will produce zero emissions. These initiatives will not only modernize Metra fleet and maintenance equipment but also improve air quality in environmentally burdened areas in the Chicago region that experience a disproportionate amount of the impacts of air pollution and see higher negative impacts from lung disease.

The Respiratory Health Association's mission is to prevent lung disease, promote clean air, and help people live better through education, research, and policy change. Metra's initiatives to significantly reduce harmful engine emissions are in line with RHA's mission and are key steps towards improving air quality and respiratory health in the Chicago region. We urge your full consideration of their application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Urbaszewski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Brian Urbaszewski  
Director, Environmental Health Programs