

Progressive Railroading

NS/Amtrak/IDOT pact will advance Englewood flyover project, Sen. Durbin says

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Norfolk Southern Railway, Amtrak and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently reached a development agreement that will bring the Federal Railroad Administration one step closer to obligating \$133 million in federal funding for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) program's Englewood flyover project, according to U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.).

The agreement will advance the project and "help prevent any future attempts by House Republicans to rescind this funding," which was appropriated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, said Durbin in a prepared statement.

"Earlier this year, I joined with my colleagues to stop an attempt by the House Republicans to rescind nearly \$400 million in Illinois transportation funding — including \$133 million for the Englewood Flyover project," he said.

Considered the linchpin for the CREATE program, the flyover project calls for building a triple-track bridge at 63rd and State streets in Englewood, Ill., to carry a Metra line over four NS tracks and a potential fifth track for a high-speed rail connection to Indiana. The project will reduce delays for Amtrak trains, eliminate delays on Metra's Southwest Service line and shorten commutes on Metra's Rock Island line, according to Durbin. About 78 Metra, 14 Amtrak and numerous freight trains currently pass through an Englewood crossing each day.

The CREATE program includes 70 projects — such as overpasses, underpasses, viaduct improvements, grade crossing enhancements, and track and signal upgrades — that are designed to restructure, modernize and expand the Chicago region's passenger- and freight-rail network. Currently, 13 projects are under construction.

CREATE's public/private partners include Amtrak, the Association of American Railroads, Belt Railway Co. of Chicago, BNSF Railway Co., CSXT, CN, Canadian Pacific, Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad Co., NS, Union Pacific Railroad, IDOT and the Chicago DOT