



# CITY OF FLAGSTAFF

## FLAGSTAFF CITY COUNCIL

211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Main Line: 928-213-2000

Website: <https://www.flagstaff.az.gov>

May 6, 2026

The Honorable David Armstrong Fink  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Letter of Support – Seligman Sub Big Fill Lake Project: Critical Hydraulic Infrastructure Enhancing Flagstaff (CHIEF)

Dear Administrator Fink,

I write in strong support of the City of Flagstaff's application for \$15,603,142 in Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant funding for the Seligman Sub Big Fill Lake Project. This project directly addresses the FRA's stated priorities for the FY 2025–2026 CRISI cycle for improving railroad safety, supporting passenger rail ridership and the family travel experience, advancing a state of good repair, and reducing trespassing fatalities on a nationally significant rail corridor.

The Southwest Chief corridor has experienced six pedestrian fatalities at the project site since 2020. This record of loss is precisely the kind of documented safety failure the FRA has identified as a funding priority in the current cycle. The project would construct a grade-separated pedestrian crossing, directly reducing trespassing risk and preventing future fatalities. Few investments are more responsive to FRA's call for projects that reduce injuries and fatalities through infrastructure improvements.

The project also addresses critical drainage vulnerability. Aging and undersized culverts at this location can no longer adequately manage major storm events, placing the corridor at recurring risk of flood-related service disruption. The FRA has expressed particular interest in projects that address existing infrastructure with high failure costs; this site, with its documented history of flood risk on a transcontinental corridor, is precisely such an investment.

The Southwest Chief provides long-distance passenger rail service across eight states, carrying more than 260,000 passengers annually, including over 36,000 intercity passengers at Flagstaff, Winslow, and Kingman. Flagstaff Station serves as the primary rail gateway to Grand Canyon National Park, one of America's most visited family destinations. Unmitigated flooding at this



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location threatens service reliability for families who depend on the Southwest Chief as their primary means of reaching the Grand Canyon, a direct impact on the family travel experience the FRA has identified as a key evaluation consideration.

Beyond passenger service, the corridor supports more than 70 daily freight trains carrying essential goods. Repeated flood-related disruptions would impose measurable costs on supply chains and rural communities that rely on this infrastructure. Protecting this corridor sustains economic competitiveness and freight reliability that CRISI is designed to advance.

This project is eligible under 49 U.S.C. § 22907 and is positioned for immediate implementation. The City of Flagstaff and BNSF Railway will provide the required 20 percent non-federal match evidence of a secure, committed cost share. Design and engineering work is complete, and the project is structured to proceed expeditiously following award. Given the FRA's increased emphasis on project readiness as a scored criterion in this cycle, the Seligman Sub Big Fill Lake Project is well-positioned to deliver results quickly and efficiently.

Without this investment, a documented infrastructure failure and a preventable safety hazard will continue to threaten the uninterrupted operation of a vital transcontinental corridor with significant national consequences. I respectfully urge you to give this proposal full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Daggett".

Becky Daggett,

Mayor, City of Flagstaff, on behalf of the Flagstaff City Council