



February 25, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: La Veta Pass Rail Project

Dear Secretary Duffy,

We are writing in support of the San Luis Valley Council of Government's (SLVCOG) request for a 2026 Better Utilizing Investments for Leveraging Development (BUILD) grant; CFDA # 20.993. This grant will provide essential support in rebuilding 22.3 miles of Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad (CXRG) over La Veta Pass (Elev. 9,970), which is the sole railroad connection between Colorado's San Luis Valley and the nation's railroad network.

*The La Veta Pass Rail Project* includes track, tie, and ballast replacement; reconditioning of roadbed and shoulders; and related road and rail work. Once complete, the project will provide improved safety, operational efficiency, and service reliability, enabling increased operating track speeds, from a low of 5 mph up to 25 mph. The La Veta Pass Rail Project cost is \$9.6 million, with \$2.59 million or 27% of the cost provided by CXRG Railroad.

After the CXRG Railroad acquired the neighboring San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad, CXRG is now able to restore sustainable rail operations throughout the San Luis Valley. Rehabilitating the La Veta Pass rail is essential to the project as this is a vital link to its interchange with the Union Pacific Railroad in Walsenburg, CO. The project will provide economic benefits throughout the San Luis Valley, opening up one of the nation's largest potato growing regions to reliable, efficient freight rail service. The project will also help optimize the region's transportation system, moving greater freight volumes by rail, reducing highway and county road congestion and maintenance costs.

It is our sincere hope that the SLVCOG's BUILD grant request will receive serious and timely consideration. This project is one of our most important economic and transportation initiatives in decades. If you have any questions related to our support, please contact Vern Heersink, Alamosa County Chairman, at [vheersink@alamosacounty.org](mailto:vheersink@alamosacounty.org).

Sincerely,

Vern Heersink, Chairman  
Alamosa County

Cc/file

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ALAMOSA COUNTY

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