

**Remarks Prepared for FRA Administrator Amit Bose
Amtrak CEO Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) Summit
Washington, DC
April 4, 2023**

Good morning, everyone.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here today to speak with you on this important topic.

Thank you to Stephen Gardner for inviting me and to Amtrak for organizing this inaugural event.

I would also like to take a moment and recognize the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC), the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), COMTO, and the National Minority Supplier Development Council.

Your long-standing efforts to support the future growth of our industry by continuing to seek improvement in the diversity, equity, and inclusion space deserve recognition and appreciation.

With historic levels of funding from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law now available, this is our moment to build more and build better, while creating jobs and unlocking exciting new economic prospects for all.

With an historic \$66 billion in rail funding, we have an opportunity to grow a safer, cleaner, and more equitable rail system.

We also have a prime opportunity to ensure that businesses of all sizes and those that have been underrepresented have equal opportunity to benefit.

FRA has and will continue to work across modes and with stakeholders to advance equity, civil rights, racial justice, environmental justice, and equal opportunity.

As you may know, the infrastructure law directed FRA to conduct a report analyzing the availability and usage of minority- and women-owned small businesses in the rail sector.

FRA delivered the report to Congress last September.

While the next steps for the report are up to Congress, FRA will continue to engage with stakeholders to advance a small business development program.

As the report was being prepared, the need to better access data about how recipients of federal funds through the FRA engaged in contracting and subcontracting became clear.

We are taking steps to capture utilization data for contracting by recipients, including the utilization rates for small, minority, and women-owned businesses.

Currently, FRA is also in the process of staffing a small business development program.

One of the program's key activities will be conducting outreach to small, minority, and women-owned businesses to help them connect with opportunities in the rail space.

For the first time, FRA has robust, sustained funding that will advance vital rail projects across the country, expanding opportunities and travel options to diverse communities.

Last year, FRA obligated an unprecedented \$4.3 billion to Amtrak. More than \$4.5 billion in Federal-State Partnership funding is available right now to expand existing passenger rail service and future high-speed rail projects nationwide.

These investments, as well as the Corridor Identification and Development Program launched last year and the Amtrak Long-Distance Service Study currently underway, will pave the way for expanding passenger rail across our country.

In the coming months, FRA will announce project selections for our new Railroad Crossing Elimination Program.

The program will advance FRA's top priority: safety by funding overpasses, underpasses, and other highway-rail grade crossing improvements. It will also reduce wait times at crossings, increase the mobility of people and goods, and connect communities previously cut off from each other and essentials due to railroad crossings.

As we administer our competitive grant programs and work with project sponsors, FRA strives to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the process.

We recently revised the terms of our grant clause included in our grant agreements to encourage small business participation in federally assisted rail projects, as one example.

This final clause will require recipients of federal funds to provide the maximum practicable opportunities for small businesses, including veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

This change will also require recipients to submit plans explaining how they will implement the clause and periodically submit data.

This will help FRA better understand the flow of funds to small businesses and inform future policy decisions.

We need to build the next generation of the rail workforce and ensure a sustainable pipeline of professionals to execute the multi-year projects that we are funding. That pipeline includes women and under-represented groups.

The future of rail in America is bright, and we want as many communities as possible to share in the benefits of that future.

Right now, is the time to ensure that our industry is on a path toward ensuring that people and businesses from diverse areas and backgrounds feel our investments.

This summit is an important step forward, allowing us to collaborate and share best practices to help develop an industry that matches the diversity of America.

I hope you carry with you what you learn today, and I look forward to the progress we can make together.

Thank you for your time.