



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative David Cook (R-7)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

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Wednesday, May 8, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## House Transportation Chairman David Cook Advocates for Eastern Arizona Rail Safety, Efficiency, and Resiliency Project

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – State Representative David Cook, Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, on Tuesday sent a letter to the Federal Railway Administration in support of the Arizona Eastern Railway Company's (AZER) application for a federal Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement grant.

In his letter, Chairman Cook stresses the importance of the Eastern Arizona Rail Safety, Efficiency, and Resiliency Project to improve AZER's rail infrastructure by converting three timber structures to steel, replacing obsolete rail with new continuous welded rail, acquiring two tank cars for wildfire firefighting, and implementing pedestrian safety measures.

**“AZER's services are vital to the large employers in my district, and upgraded rail infrastructure is for continued growth, safety, and economic development,”** writes Chairman Cook. **“I fully support this Project because of the critical safety improvements and operational reliability it will bring to my district.”**

Chairman Cook's letter is attached.

*David Cook is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 7, which includes Pinal, Gila, Coconino, and Navajo Counties. He is Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the House International Trade Committee. Follow him on X/Twitter at @RepDavidCook.*

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DISTRICT 7

# Arizona House of Representatives

## Phoenix, Arizona 85007

May 7, 2024

Administrator Amit Bose  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

### **RE: Eastern Arizona Rail Safety, Efficiency, and Resiliency Project Support**

Dear Administrator Bose:

I am pleased to support the efforts of the Arizona Eastern Railway Company (AZER) as they prepare a federal Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant application for the Eastern Arizona Rail Safety, Efficiency, and Resiliency Project (the Project). Once completed, the Project will ensure AZER can continue to offer competitive, efficient, and safe freight rail service to both existing and new customers. The railroad provides essential transportation services in my district and helps reduce truck traffic.

The Project will continue efforts to upgrade and harden AZER Infrastructure, enhance safety, and strengthen a critical freight corridor at risk due to climate change. The scope of the Project includes converting three existing timber structures to steel, replacing old, obsolete rail with new continuous welded rail in two major line segments, procuring two tank cars for wildland firefighting, and implementing proven pedestrian safety measures to reduce railroad incidents.

In July 2021, a timber structure on the AZER was destroyed after a wildfire swept through the area. The incident resulted in a total and complete service disruption and railroad closure. Railroad customers were forced to truck their goods until rail service was restored. Completion of the Project will lessen the probability of a similar incident.

The Project will allow AZER to improve safety and operational reliability, ensure the long-term viability of rail transportation, and support economic growth. The Arizona economy is dependent on the ability of shippers, big and small, to move their goods efficiently and safely through the supply chain. Short-line railroads like AZER are instrumental in that movement. This CRISI grant request is supported by a 30% match from AZER.

AZER's services are vital to the large employers in my district, and upgraded rail infrastructure is essential for continued growth, safety, and economic development. I fully support this Project because of the critical safety improvements and operational reliability it will bring to my district. Thank you for your consideration of this vital project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a distinct "L" and "C".

The Honorable David Cook  
Arizona House of Representatives, LD 7  
House Transportation Committee Chair  
House International Trade Chair