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**NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT ANNOUNCES FEDERAL
TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL TO ENTER ENGINEERING FOR THE WEST LAKE
CORRIDOR PROJECT**

CHESTERTON, Indiana October 7, 2019 – The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), operator of the South Shore Line railroad, announced today that it is able to begin the design and engineering phase of the West Lake Corridor Project after receiving approval to enter the New Starts Engineering phase of the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Capital Investment Grant program.

“Extending rail service will save Hoosiers both time and money – but it’s also a critical part of our efforts to strengthen our economy and attract new residents,” Gov. Eric J. Holcomb said. “I’m grateful that local, state and federal leaders have come together to connect northwest Indiana to the nation’s third largest city and beyond so that our workforce and our businesses will be able to mutually grow.”

Gov. Holcomb’s Next Level Agenda includes the West Lake Corridor Project, which involves construction of a new eight mile line extending from Hammond on the north to Dyer on the south. The project includes four new stations: a Gateway station in north Hammond, a station at 173rd street in Hammond, a station at Ridge Road in Munster and a station at the border of Munster and Dyer off of Main Street. Additionally, a new maintenance facility will be built in north Hammond.

The current state budget, which Gov. Holcomb signed into law earlier this year, doubles the state's investment in northwest Indiana rail by dedicating \$185 million more to projects and includes an additional \$20 million in a contingency fund.

The West Lake Corridor Project is occurring in partnership with the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) and the Indiana Finance Authority, who are serving as funding partners.

"The FTA's acceptance of NICTD's West Lake Corridor into the second stage of the Capital Investment Grant program represents a significant milestone for Hoosiers," Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., said. "This development is welcome news for future job creation and economic growth in Northwest Indiana. I look forward to working with my colleagues as West Lake works to sign a Full Funding Grant Agreement and bring this important Indiana infrastructure project to fruition."

"I am pleased to hear the Federal Transit Administration has approved the West Lake Corridor project," Sen. Mike Braun, R-Ind., said. "This important development on the South Shore Line will connect Hoosiers in Lake County and nearby communities to high-paying jobs and other opportunities while encouraging investment in the Munster, Hammond, and Dyer areas."

"I congratulate Governor Holcomb, the Northwest Indiana state legislative delegation, Senators Young and Braun, the RDA, and our 15 local communities for their financial participation, and NICTD for achieving this important milestone," Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., said. "The West Lake project will be transformational. This success will help retain and attract people and businesses which will grow our region. I will continue to work with all parties involved to secure the necessary federal funding to support the application. We will continue to work toward the same success for the NICTD double track project."

In addition to the West Lake Corridor project, NICTD, the RDA and the Indiana Finance Authority will continue to work with state and federal authorities on advancing towards federal funding for the second major commuter rail expansion project in the region, the Double Track

Northwest Indiana Project. The Double Track Project is a 25 mile corridor improvement project including the construction of 17 miles of new track, four new bridges, high-level platforms at three stations, the elimination of street-running rail in Michigan City and the closure of 21 grade crossings.

“We are truly excited to announce that the West Lake Corridor project has reached this critical milestone in the FTA’s Capital Investment Grant program,” said Michael Noland, President and CEO of NICTD. “The continued hard work of the project team and the full support of Governor Holcomb, the Indiana General Assembly, and our Hoosier congressional delegation is reflected in reaching this critical milestone.”

Combined, the Double Track Northwest Indiana and West Lake Corridor projects are projected to attract approximately \$2.3 billion in private investment to Northwest Indiana, and result in over 6,000 new jobs and \$3 billion in economic impact by 2048.

“These projects will be game-changers for the region and the state,” said Bill Hanna, President and CEO of the RDA. “By increasing our connectivity to Chicago, the third-largest metro area in the country, commuter rail will drive job creation and economic development here in Northwest Indiana and provide a much better opportunity for residents to compete for high-paying jobs in Chicago.”

For additional information regarding this project, visit <http://www.nictdwestlake.com>.