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Saint Paul, MN 55101

March 20, 2020

Chair Frank Hornstein, Transportation Finance and Policy Division
Minnesota House of Representatives
545 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chair Hornstein and Members of the Transportation Finance and Policy Committee:

We thank you for your quick work to support all Minnesotans as we work together to fight COVID-19.

The state's transit providers are working hard to protect public safety with the resources they have.

Those resources are clearly not enough.

In both Greater Minnesota and in the metro region, providers:

- are cutting service
- are still seeing crowding on some routes.

We need enough service levels so that essential workers—whether medical staff or grocery store staff—can get to work, including for non-standard shifts.

And we need enough service so that riders can keep their distance from each other and from drivers.

All of this requires funding at a time when agencies are asking people *not* to ride if they don't have to; and people are responding, deeply cutting revenue.

Further compounding the challenge, agencies including Metro Transit are considering rear-door only boarding for buses, and not collecting fares as a further step to protect bus drivers. If they do so, they will be following the lead of other agencies across the country.

Meeting all of these needs requires immediate, emergency financial support.

While agencies develop requests, the purpose of this letter is to ask you to be prepared to support those requests when they arrive.



The leadership of the whole legislature in this crisis has been and continues to be exceptional and admirably non-partisan. We urge you to include statewide transit providers in the list of necessary institutions that need help with emergency funding. We need your and your committee's support in connecting Minnesotans more than ever.

Thank you for your work and leadership.

Sincerely,



William Schroer
Executive Director, East Metro Strong



Jonathan Weinlagen
President & CEO, Minneapolis Regional Chamber



B Kyle
President & CEO, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

cc:

Vice Chair Rep. Tabke

Committee members
