



May 12, 2022

To: Chair, Rep. Frank Hornstein
Transportation and Policy Committee
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Vice Chair, Rep. Erin Koegel
Transportation and Policy Committee
445 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

From: All Aboard Minnesota
P.O. Box 4212
St. Paul, MN 55104
www.allaboardmn.org

Dear Chair Hornstein and Vice Chair Koegel,

We are writing on behalf of our members, associates, partners and supporters **to ask that you support HF 3160.**

All Aboard Minnesota is a non-profit citizen advocacy group that represents more than **2,500 members, friends and supporters throughout the state** that actively seek more rail passenger service statewide as a needed transportation option and which will economically benefit the communities served and the state.

A total of **\$26 Million** is requested to accomplish the following in this biennium:

- ❖ **Enable MnDOT to study extending the 2nd train frequency between the Twin Cities and Chicago to St. Cloud, and Fargo/Moorhead.**
 - Projected ridership on a daytime schedule in this corridor estimated to be **100,000** new riders per year. Amtrak's Empire Builder passenger train serves this route westbound late at night, and early morning eastbound
 - Will serve and connect many greater Minnesota communities such as Wadena, Detroit Lakes, Staples, Little Falls, and St. Cloud, to the Twin Cities
 - Provides freer connectivity of people between urban and rural areas, generating a positive return on investment for the communities served and the state
 - BNSF Railway has invested at least an estimated **\$325M** in this route since **2015**, which has reduced the state's portion of the investment needed for more passenger rail service

- ❖ **New MnDOT service study for passenger service between the Twin Cities, Northfield, Faribault, Owatonna, Albert Lea, to Des Moines, and Kansas City.**
 - Projected ridership on this corridor estimated to be over **190,000** riders per year
 - Directly connects Minnesotans to Amtrak trains serving St. Louis, Denver, Phoenix, Los Angeles, and San Francisco without connecting through Chicago first, drastically reducing travel times
 - Connection of metropolitan areas like Des Moines, Kansas City, and Omaha and many rural communities in between to Minnesota, providing freer flow of people and greater economic impact
 - Union Pacific Railroad has invested an estimated **\$300M** recently in this line, which means the line is better prepared to provide passenger service than ever before and will reduce any state investment cost

- ❖ **Allow MnDOT to study a dedicated passenger main line between downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis to enhance capacity for these two routes and Northern Lights Express, and a maintenance facility.**

Why is it important to support HF 3160?

- ❖ Provides the backbone of a statewide public transportation network benefitting college students, families with children, seniors, disabled, and those who can't drive or fly, as a mobility option. Provides "all weather" transportation especially in treacherous winter conditions
- ❖ Provides economic stimulus, jobs, local investment, tourism, and a positive return on investment for Minnesota
- ❖ Utilizes public-private partnerships with freight railroads and Amtrak, minimizing capital expense and operating costs using existing infrastructure. Investment in passenger rail benefits freight operations, speeding goods and services
- ❖ Connects Minnesota to metropolitan areas like Fargo/Moorhead, Des Moines, Kansas City, and Denver, further benefiting our economy
- ❖ Provides economic competitiveness with other states in the upper Midwest such as Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and Michigan which have made significant investments in passenger rail. Grants are available now in the IIJA Act passed by Congress. Minnesota needs to act now to receive these grants
- ❖ Passenger rail travel produces up to **83%** fewer greenhouse gas emissions than driving and is **45%** more energy efficient than automobiles
- ❖ There is widespread support from cities in Minnesota that want expanded passenger rail service. Cities such as Anoka, Little Falls, Staples, Brainerd, Wadena, St. Paul, Red Wing, Winona, and LaCrescent passed resolutions recently citing economic and mobility benefits for their cities and residents

Minnesota deserves a multi-modal, all-weather transportation network that serves all of its citizens with the options they need. Highways and airways can no longer do this alone. The Minnesota legislature needs to act and provide funding for more passenger trains. Our economic vitality is at stake.

More information can be found on our site: www.allaboardmn.org. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Best Regards,

Board of Directors
All Aboard Minnesota
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