



395 John Ireland Blvd
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

April 20, 2022

Representative Rena Moran
Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
449 State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Members
House Ways and Means Committee

Chair Moran and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), thank you for the opportunity to share MnDOT's perspective on the House-omnibus transportation bill.

We appreciate the bill's **inclusion of several items from the Governor's policy and budget proposals**, including:

- Indian employment preference
- North Star Bikeway
- Drones/insurance requirements
- Turn backs
- State aid needs calculation
- Municipal Screening Board
- Reporting requirements for transit grant recipients
- Funding for small cities assistance
- Allowing the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at certain rest areas
- Funding for the Northern Lights Express passenger rail line between Minneapolis and Duluth
- Operating funds for the second daily train to Chicago
- Funding for Safe Routes to Schools and active transportation
- \$80M in trunk highway bonds for high priority bridges
- Funding for the facilities capital improvement program
- Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response funding
- Rail grade crossing safety funds
- Utility aircraft replacement

We are also pleased to see the inclusion of policy changes to the **Corridors of Commerce program**, which provide clarification on how the program is to be administered. Delaying the solicitation date to February 1, 2023, is also appreciated, as it will provide the agency time to successfully implement the proposed changes.

The bill **includes state matching funds to leverage federal funds provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)**. These funds will support the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, County State Aid Highways, Municipal State Aid Streets, and multimodal transportation, and maximize federal transportation funding to combat climate change. The bill also includes additional program planning and delivery and agency services funding as recommended by the Governor, to help deliver and manage the significant increase in federal funds from the IIJA. Unfortunately, the **Governor's proposal to use new, ongoing trunk highway funding**

transferred from the state general fund is not included in the bill. Additional matching funds for state road construction, as well as additional funds for operations and maintenance, are included, but only funded for the current biennium from existing trunk highway fund balance.

The bill **does not include the Governor's budget request for operating pressures** to help offset increasing costs across the agency.

We appreciate the intent of the creation of the **Highways for Habitat Program**, including the report due January 15, 2025, but are **concerned that the lack of ongoing funding for the Highway for Habitat Program could jeopardize its long-term success.**

While we recognize the intent of the agency assisting with federal grant applications related to the IIJA, we have **suggestions on how to implement the Federal Funds Local Assistance Program.** We are working with the author and stakeholders on language to help ensure successful implementation of the proposed program.

Thank you for the opportunity to share MnDOT's perspective on the omnibus transportation bill. We look forward to working with you to address these issues as the bill progresses through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Daubenberger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Daubenberger, P.E.
Interim Commissioner

cc: Representative Frank Hornstein, Chair, House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
Representative John Petersburg, Ranking Minority Member, House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee

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