



HENNEPIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A-2400 GOVERNMENT CENTER
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55487-0240

March 24, 2021

Representative Frank Hornstein
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

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

Minnesota's climate is changing rapidly. We are seeing greater precipitation year-round, more damaging rains, warmer temperatures in the winter, and stronger storms. These changes impact Minnesota's infrastructure, waters, natural resources and pose financial and quality of life risks for Minnesotans. We need bold action now, like the Sustainable Transportation Act, to create a better future for ourselves and generations to come.

Climate change and transportation pollution more acutely affect our most vulnerable residents. Data show that communities of color, low income families, and residents with disabilities contribute least to the problem of climate pollution, but are the most impacted by negative climate impacts, like flooding events, heat waves, and poor air quality. Communities in North Minneapolis, South Minneapolis, and inner-ring suburbs are surrounded and bisected by the highest volume roadways and suffer disproportionately from vehicle pollution. They experience more hospitalizations, emergency-room visits for asthma, and deaths related to air pollution.

The State of Minnesota and Hennepin County share the same greenhouse gas emission goals outlined in the bi-partisan Next Generation Energy Act of 2007 to reduce to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2015, 30 percent by 2025, and 80 percent by 2050. However, neither the State nor Hennepin County met the 2015 emissions reduction goal and we are not on track to meet the upcoming 2025 goal. While progress has been made to reduce GHG emissions from electricity generation, transportation emissions have only slightly decreased. As a result, transportation remains the number one source of GHG emissions in Minnesota and Hennepin County.

Hennepin County has learned that 35% of the GHG emissions emitted within our boundaries come from the transportation sector. As described above, the County is bisected by several of the state's highest volume Interstate and State highways, more than 2,200 lane miles of county roads, and thousands more miles of city streets.

Emissions in the vehicle sector are most influenced by land use and community planning, modes of transportation, and fuel choice and fuel efficiency. Hennepin County is reducing transportation-induced emissions in the ways we plan, develop, and manage our county roads and rights of way and through our investments in transit, electric vehicle infrastructure, and our built environment. We are in the process of adopting a bold climate action plan with strategies to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce air pollution, with particular focus on areas with vulnerable populations.

We strongly support the efforts in the Sustainable Transportation Act to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 20 percent by 2050, expand charging infrastructure, work with the Metropolitan Council on the goal to transition the transit fleet to zero emission by 2040, and prioritize investments in the preservation and maintenance of our trunk highway system.

Climate change will have significant environmental, societal, and economic impact on Minnesotans. Decisive action along with investments in equity, environmental justice, safety, and economic development are required to counter the negative impacts. The Sustainable Transportation Act will advance progress towards achieving several of the State's and Hennepin County's emission reduction goals.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marion Greene". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Marion Greene, Chair
Hennepin County Board of Commissioners