

**Nicholas J Katich**  
Legislative Director,  
Chairperson

**Robert L Dickerson**  
Assistant Director

**Brandon Jenny**  
Secretary



**SMART-TD Minnesota**  
1219 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite C  
Cloquet, MN 55720  
651-222-7500 (o)  
218-310-7401 (c)  
[sld@smart-td-minnesota.org](mailto:sld@smart-td-minnesota.org)

## *Minnesota Legislative Board*

House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee  
Chair Koznick and Committee Members  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

### **Subject: Opposition to HF 1167 and Support for the Northern Lights Express**

Chair Koznick and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of SMART-TD Minnesota, which represents over two thousand active and retired railroad workers across the state, I write to express our **strong opposition to House File 1167**, which seeks to prohibit expenditures for the Northern Lights Express (NLX) passenger rail project. The NLX is more than just a transportation project—it is an investment in good-paying union jobs, a modern rail network, and a stronger Minnesota economy.

This project will create thousands of construction and railroad jobs while expanding passenger rail service that benefits working people across the state. It is essential that Minnesota takes advantage of this opportunity to build critical transportation infrastructure that will serve generations to come.

The Northern Lights Express will generate significant employment opportunities in both rail operations and construction. This project will:

- **Create Thousands of Union Construction Jobs** – The building and modernization of rail infrastructure will provide high-quality employment for skilled tradespeople, including electricians, track workers, operating engineers, ironworkers, and laborers.
- **Support Permanent Railroad Jobs** – Once operational, NLX will employ union railroad workers, including conductors, engineers, dispatchers, and maintenance crews, providing steady, family-supporting wages and benefits.
- **Strengthen Minnesota's Rail Workforce** – By investing in passenger rail, Minnesota will help sustain and grow our rail workforce, ensuring long-term economic stability for communities along the corridor.

In addition to job creation, NLX will serve as a vital transportation option for working people, providing an affordable and reliable alternative to long-distance driving. It will:

- **Increase Access to Jobs** – Many Minnesotans travel between Duluth and the Twin Cities for work. NLX will provide a safe, efficient commute, reducing travel time and expenses.
- **Enhance Workforce Mobility** – By connecting workers to job opportunities across the region, NLX will help businesses attract and retain employees, strengthening Minnesota's economy.
- **Reduce Transportation Costs** – With rising fuel prices and vehicle maintenance costs, rail travel offers an affordable alternative that will benefit workers and families.

The federal government has made historic investments in passenger rail, and Minnesota has an opportunity to leverage these funds to modernize its transportation infrastructure. If HF 1167 is passed, Minnesota will forfeit critical federal dollars and delay necessary improvements that will benefit our state's economy, workforce, and transportation network.

The **SMART-TD Minnesota Transportation Union urges you to oppose HF 1167** and support the Northern Lights Express as a forward-thinking investment in our workers, economy, and rail industry. This project will create thousands of union jobs, expand economic opportunities, and provide Minnesota with a world-class transportation option.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. We look forward to working with you to ensure a strong future for rail transportation and working families in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Katich', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Nicholas Katich**  
SMART-TD Minnesota Transportation Union