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Co-Chair Koznick, Co-Chair Tabke, and Members of the House Transportation Committee,

We are writing to share our concerns regarding HF 3513 and the testing and adoption of connected and automated vehicles in Minnesota.

Our Streets serves over 25,000 core supporters and many more in communities where we organize, working to build a safe, sustainable transportation system that creates vibrant communities across Minnesota. We believe mobility is a public right — connecting people to jobs, school, family, and opportunity in big cities, suburbs, and small towns alike. The embrace of autonomous vehicles, including the recent start of Waymo testing in Minneapolis, threatens to undermine that vision.

Public streets are public infrastructure. They are not experimental platforms for private technology companies. HF 3513 would grant sweeping authority for autonomous vehicle networks to operate across Minnesota while limiting local and state oversight. That shift has profound implications for democratic control, public safety, labor protections, climate goals, fiscal stewardship, and the future design of our streets and the transportation system at large. Before authorizing new commercial uses of our public infrastructures, the Legislature should ensure a high standard for those uses to ensure they advance — not undermine — statewide priorities.

### **Threatening Labor and the Local Economy**

Our transportation system is a tool for economic opportunity — for the people it connects, the workers it employs, and the communities where better investments like rightsizing roads, transit, and active transportation can build shared prosperity. Autonomous vehicles pose an immediate threat to rideshare drivers and transit operators, with longer-term risks for truck drivers. If public policy enables private automation that reduces local employment while extracting value for out-of-state companies, it contradicts our commitment to jobs and community wealth building.

If public roads are subsidizing business models that reduce employment and export value, that is not innovation — it is economic displacement.

### **Undercutting Transit**

Connected and autonomous vehicles undercut Minnesota's progress toward building a world-class transit system with fast, frequent, safe, and affordable service. Waymo and similar services are not affordable for many transit-dependent riders and do not replace fixed-route transit, which generates jobs, supports dense walkable development, and provides affordable and accessible transportation for the 1 in 3 Minnesotans who can't or choose not to drive.

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When private, app-based autonomous services compete with transit, they reinforce a two-tiered system: premium, individualized mobility for those who can afford it, and underfunded buses and trains for everyone else. Public policy should strengthen collective systems, not undermine them. Minnesota has adopted statutory goals and climate pollution reduction targets. Strengthening transit and reducing car dependence are essential to meeting those goals. Policies that increase private vehicle fleets while undercutting transit move us in the opposite direction.

Any policy on the operation of commercial autonomous vehicles should include ride-based fees to support transit capital and operations, similar to fees created by the City of Seattle when rideshare first arrived, to support transportation projects and affordable housing. This bill would prevent that conversation from taking place.

### **Safety Concerns**

There are many outstanding questions on the safety of automated vehicles from a variety of potential operators. In our view, prioritizing safety means investing in safe street design, reducing the need to drive, and providing safe infrastructure to bike, walk, roll, and use public transit. While automated safety features may eventually be incorporated into conventional vehicles to support, not replace drivers, allowing fully automated vehicles onto Minnesota roads without adequate safeguards or conclusive data is premature.

The bill establishes authorization procedures but does not require clear performance standards tied to pedestrian safety, transit interactions, or protections for vulnerable road users beyond existing laws for conventional vehicles. Passenger vehicle automation is also a gateway to further automation, including trucking and freight. While we want fewer heavy trucks polluting communities, qualified human drivers remain essential for community safety.

### **Cementing Overbuilt Car Infrastructure**

Autonomous vehicles spend significant time driving empty, not en route to pick up a passenger. They require curb space, staging areas, and pickup zones, increasing congestion and reinforcing pressure to expand already overbuilt road systems — rather than investing in dedicated transit space and other more efficient and affordable ways to move people.

Minnesota communities are working to reduce car dependency through safety improvements, highway turnbacks and removal, street lane conversions, 24/7 bus lanes, protected bikeways, pedestrianization, and community-centered uses of public streets such as Open Streets events and neighborhood gatherings.

The safest, most economically prosperous, and most climate-aligned cities are not the ones with smarter cars. They are the ones with fewer cars. HF 3513 would accelerate vehicle-centered planning at a time when communities are asking for streets that serve people first.

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Further, HF 3513 preempts local governments from meaningfully regulating autonomous vehicle operations or charging infrastructure-use fees. This undermines local control, democratic accountability, and strips communities of the ability to align transportation policy with local goals, safety priorities, and land-use planning. Transportation decisions should not be made without the communities most affected being consulted.

### **Conclusion**

Minnesotans have been clear: they want more transportation choices, affordability, environmental and climate responsibility, labor protections, and democratic accountability. The solution to these challenges is upstream investment — stable housing, reliable transit, safe street design — not automation layered onto an already overbuilt car system.

HF 3513 threatens workers across our state, accelerates private extraction from public infrastructure, threatens transit stability, and reinforces car dependence at a time when communities are working to reduce it and build safe, affordable, and sustainable transportation systems.

This is not the direction Minnesota should move.

We urge the committee to reject HF 3513, to have additional thoughtful conversation on the impacts of connected and automated vehicles, and continue to support policies that strengthen public transit, protect workers, reduce car dependence, increase fiscal responsibility, and keep transportation governance accountable to the people of Minnesota.



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