

March 7, 2025

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

Dear Chair Koznick and Members of the Committee,

As the City Administrator for Cambridge and Vice Chair of the Northern Lights Express (NLX) Alliance, I am writing to oppose House File 1167, which seeks to prohibit expenditures for the Northern Lights Express passenger rail project. The NLX represents an essential investment in Minnesota's future, providing a modern, efficient transportation option that will benefit communities like Cambridge by driving economic growth, expanding workforce mobility, and improving access to essential services.

Cambridge is uniquely positioned along the NLX corridor, and the development of passenger rail service will provide significant advantages to our residents, businesses, and regional economy. HF 1167 would halt progress on a project that has the potential to transform the way people travel and do business in our community.

A direct rail connection between Cambridge and the Twin Cities will create substantial opportunities for economic expansion:

- **Attracting New Businesses** – Reliable transportation access is a key factor in site selection for businesses looking to relocate or expand. NLX will make Cambridge a more attractive location for employers by improving commuter access and connectivity.
- **Boosting Local Commerce** – Increased visitor traffic from NLX passengers will support local shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues, bringing new revenue to Cambridge's business community, and to the surrounding area.
- **Strengthening Workforce Mobility** – NLX will provide a dependable, cost-effective transportation option for residents commuting to jobs in the Twin Cities and beyond, reducing reliance on personal vehicles and expanding employment opportunities.

Cambridge residents face limited public transportation options, particularly for those who commute long distances. The NLX will:

- **Reduce Traffic Congestion and Enhance Safety** – By offering a viable alternative to highway travel, NLX will alleviate congestion along Highway 65 and I-35, reducing traffic-related accidents and wear on road infrastructure.

- **Provide Reliable, Year-Round Transportation** – Minnesota’s harsh winters create challenges for commuters and travelers. NLX will provide a safe and efficient travel option, ensuring reliable transportation even in severe weather conditions.
- **Expand Transit Access for Students, Seniors, and Veterans** – Many students, seniors, and Veterans without access to a personal vehicle will benefit from a convenient, affordable passenger rail service. Additionally, an RLP has been issued by the VA to possibly build a new VA Clinic in the City. Along with clinics in Duluth and Minneapolis, this transportation option would greatly benefit veterans up and down the line looking for better, more reliable transportation to their appointments.

The federal government has made historic levels of funding available for passenger rail projects, and Minnesota has an opportunity to capitalize on this investment. Prohibiting state expenditures, as proposed in HF 1167, would forfeit millions of dollars in federal support and delay a project that is critical to our state’s transportation future.

The City of Cambridge urges you to **oppose HF 1167** and support the Northern Lights Express as a strategic investment that will benefit our local economy, create jobs, and improve transportation for our residents. Now is the time to move forward with a project that will position Minnesota—and communities like Cambridge—for long-term success.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. We look forward to working with you to advance a modern, connected, and thriving Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Evan C. Vogel
City Administrator, City of Cambridge
Vice Chair, Northern Lights Express Alliance