

March 27, 2023

Chair Sandra Pappas, Senate Capital Investment Committee

We are writing this letter to express support for Hennepin County request for \$200 million for the Blue Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) Extension project.

With statewide investment in public transit, we can protect the service Minnesotans rely on today and build a better transit system to connect communities, stabilize our climate, expand access to jobs and resources, and improve daily life for people of all ages, races, incomes, and abilities.

Transit investments supercharge other equity and climate-focused state spending — affordable housing without access to reliable transit or active transportation services can create new obstacles for families, and increased opportunities and spending for healthcare are meaningless if patients do not show up for appointments because they cannot travel to receive services.

The Blue Line Extension Light Rail project will benefit residents from Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park and across the region. The communities served by this line are transit-reliant, racially diverse, and have experienced historical disinvestment. It is important that this project centers community voices and diverse stakeholders by advancing robust anti-displacement and community wealth building strategies. The Blue Line Extension will connect the community to the broader transit network, with easy access to economic, entertainment, health, and education centers.

The Blue Line Extension LRT is a great investment of the state's historic surplus and will leverage hundreds of millions in federal funds to the state of Minnesota. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is a once-in-a-generation federal investment in our nation's infrastructure, and we must act now to maximize the federal funding coming to Minnesota and ensure equitable investment in transit projects like the Blue Line Extension LRT project.

But let's be clear. One-time funding is not enough. Reliable, long-term, dedicated funding is urgently needed to create lasting change. Long-term sustainable investments in transit, bicycling, walking, and rolling would dramatically improve daily life for Minnesota families and secure a more equitable, climate-resilient future for all of us.

