

**Minnesota House of Representatives
Committee on State Government Finance and Elections**

March 8, 2022

**Written Testimony in support of HF 3483
Jason Lardy
Minnesota Cycling Center**

Dear Committee Members,

The Minnesota Cycling Center board and volunteers and the thousands of cyclists in Minnesota would like to share our support for HF 3483, which requires and provides funding for a study of the feasibility of the proposed United States Amateur Sports and Training Center in Dakota County, which could include a new velodrome bicycle racing track and STEM education facility to replace the recently dismantled, state-owned NSC Velodrome.

History of Velodrome Track Cycling in Minnesota

Minnesota has more than a century of velodrome cycling history. Minneapolis hosted its first US velodrome 6-day race in 1896. For 30 years, ending with the facility's final race in 2019, the National Sports Center in Blaine hosted racing and training at one of the finest velodromes in the United States.

Thousands of racers developed their skills and competed with the best racers in the world here in MN. Our world-class events and training facilities attracted the US Olympic team, multiple international Olympic teams and professional racers as well as their support staffs and families from around the world to Minnesota. MN racers have earned dozens of junior and elite national championships, multiple masters and elite world championships and an Olympic silver medal. Thousands of spectators cheered racers weekly during the 30 seasons of racing in Blaine. For decades, Minnesota boasted one of the world's premier cycling venues.

Mission and current activities of the MN Cycling Center

The MN Cycling Center is a recognized 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to create an unparalleled Velodrome to replace the NSC Velodrome that was torn down following the 2019 racing season. Minnesota currently has no velodrome. MN Cycling Center volunteers currently offer cycling-centric STEM education and fitness programs as a Minneapolis Public Schools partner. This new facility will allow us to provide new community cycling opportunities and expanded STEM educational programs.

The Twin Cities region is the perfect location for this valuable facility. The state of Minnesota and the Twin Cities metro area rank at or near the top of many cycling participation categories nationwide.

Minnesota highlights include:

- The 2nd highest proportion of bicycle commuter trips in the US.
- 4000+ high school bicycle racers statewide.
- Two Olympic silver medalists and a 3X track cycling world champion
- More trail miles per capita than any metropolitan area (Twin Cities).

Expanding STEM education

The MN Cycling Center is committed to giving kids a leg up both athletically and academically. Our Science, Technology, Engineering, Athletics, and Math programs combine fitness, fun and learning in a supportive, friendly environment. We have delivered 8 semesters of our “ABCs - the Science of Cycling” after-school program as a Minneapolis Public Schools Community Partner. The MN Cycling Center velodrome would offer an additional resource in the delivery of our STEM curricula.

The Need and Impact

With such a strong and robust cycling community, Minnesota and the Twin Cities provide a captive audience for a competitive racetrack and education destination. The closure of the NSC Velodrome left the state without an important cycling venue. The youth of Minnesota need access to more STEM education and fitness facilities, especially those students at greatest risk.

The MN Cycling Center wants to alleviate these issues:

- Only 39% of Minneapolis 8th graders are proficient on the MCA math test and the results are lower for students of color and those living in poverty. (MPS, 2012)
- 26% of MN 9th graders are overweight and 18% are considered obese*
- Only 32% of MN kids ages 6-13 get 60 minutes of daily exercise*

*(MN Department of Health, 2010)

Once opened, the MN Cycling Center will have a tremendous positive impact on the Twin Cities community and beyond. Below is a snapshot of added community benefits:

- 4,000 students, grades 6-12, reached annually through field trips and after-school programming
- 400 student racers and their coaches and team supporters
- 20+ state science and math standards met through unique science centered curriculum

Our place at the United States Amateur Sports and Training Center

The MN Cycling Center is a perfect fit for the proposed United States Amateur Sports and Training Center. The focus of the now-closed NSC Velodrome was on providing training and racing opportunities for amateur cyclists from around Minnesota and the world. The community that flourished there reached beyond the footprint of the track, affecting a broad range of communities. To cite just one example, at the time of its closing, the NSC Velodrome boasted the largest field of amateur women racers in the United States. This community of amateur and youth athletes needs a new home at an amateur-centric facility. The United States Amateur Sports and Training Center is a perfect fit.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the support of the MN Cycling Center and thousands of Minnesota cyclists for HF 3483. We would like to ask for your vote in support of this legislation to return track cycling to Minnesota and expand the fitness and educational opportunities for Minnesota's underserved youth and amateur athletes.

Sincerely,

Jason Lardy
President
Minnesota Cycling Center