Hi,

I'd like to submit this testimony in support of Representative Fenton's Bill [HF1624](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=House&f=HF1624&ssn=0&y=2017)/ Senator Housely's [SF1365](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?f=SF1365&y=2017&ssn=0&b=senate) to fund the I-94, I-494, and I-694 interchange project for the March 2nd hearing. This project is long overdue as it has taken a back seat to the planning of the nearly half a billion dollar Gateway Corridor/Gold Line. Yes the bill has existed for years; but it's been purely symbolic until now. This is a fact we know because up until last year the FTA had been strongly urging the Gateway Corridor planners to study a route option with a dedicated lane on I-94... this route option would have made an impressive improvement in travel time, convenience of stops just a short distance off the freeway, and would have fulfilled the definition of a "Bus Rapid Transit" BRT. However, it would have made the cost for the corridor cost well over a half a billion dollars. They studied the route as asked by the FTA; but opted to make this transit corridor wind down the back roads from Woodbury to Union Depot in St. Paul anyway. This decision was finally made last year.

I tell you about the negative impact of this doomed Gateway Corridor/Gold Line on this I-94, I-494, and I-694 interchange project because I want you to understand that the negative effects of it are far reaching. This freeway interchange is one of the most dangerous freeway interchanges in the State because motorists have little distance to get up to speed and merge. Yet since 2008 this project has sat idol because my Legislator Kelly Fenton, Joann Ward, and their predecessors had a dream of a train or bus taking around only 1,000 people a day (in the year 2040) to St. Paul on a freeway that has over 120,000 cars a day! (less than 1% decrease in congestion). In 2011 MNDOT studied adding a lane to I-94 and making it a MN-Pass lane; that was also killed by the Gateway Corridor.

The uncertainty of the Gold Line route of either going down I-94 or winding down the back streets just north I-94 has stalled the freeway interchange study because the buses would require dedicated shoulders on I-94 in the interchange study area. They were unsure if the buses would need to travel up 694 from I-94 to Oakdale. There were to many unknowns. The cost to study a version of the interchange WITH the Gateway Corridor and one without was understandably fiscally irresponsible. Even so, construction would have been delayed for the same reason.

So for almost a decade now lives have been lost at this deadly freeway interchange and the project kicked down the road all because of a ridiculously irresponsible transit corridor that was unsure if it was going to travel in this interchange. Now is the time to finally fund this project and please deny fund requests for the Gold Line when it comes up.

-Matt Behning