



Board of Commissioners

Fran Miron, District 1

Stan Karwoski, District 2

Gary Kriesel, District 3

Wayne A. Johnson, District 4

Lisa Weik, Chair, District 5

Dear Chair Hornstein:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HF 1027, the Governor's omnibus transportation recommendations for FY 2022-23. I write to express concerns with the proposed County Responsibility for Guideway Funding policy change included in this bill.

First, I want to express appreciation for your comments that you do not plan to include this provision in the omnibus Transportation Finance bill. We appreciate your willingness to work with us on this issue and are committed to addressing the issues raised by this proposal. cc

As chair of the Washington County Board of Commissioners and a long-time member of the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) executive committee, I have worked to help our region build an effective and efficient transit system that positively impacts our residents and economy.

Washington County has supported transit investment because the business sector has identified a robust regional transit system as critical to employers for workforce recruitment, retention, and expansion. The transit system operating now, resulting from the development and investment of metro counties, is an economic engine for our local, state, and regional economies.

I took critical votes during my tenure with CTIB and voted to reestablish the transportation sales tax in Washington County in 2017.

The county board was clear to our communities at that time that the transportation sales tax would only be utilized for capital expenditures matching Federal funds, and for no more than 50% of operating costs, with no county dollars going to capital maintenance.

Furthermore, the bill language is in direct conflict with Minn. Stat. 297A.993, that requires counties to hold a public hearing and adopt a project plan that lists specific transit and road projects that are eligible for the county "transportation sales tax funding." The proposed County Responsibility for Guideway Funding policy change in HF 1027 compromises critical transparency for both state and local elected officials.

This provision eliminates local control of locally raised tax dollars and establishes a new legal obligation for counties to be responsible for building, operating, and maintaining transit guideways. This would undo the longstanding partnership between the state and counties that has helped our transit system grow. If enacted, we will see fewer investments in transit, which will negatively impact the prosperity of our residents and our region's economy.

We look forward to our work together to strengthen our transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Weik".

Lisa Weik

Chair, Washington County Board of Commissioners

Cc: Members of the House Transportation Committee