



Association of Minnesota Counties

June 21, 2021

Chair Hornstein and Members of the House Transportation Finance & Policy Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a voluntary association representing all 87 counties, we want to thank you for your work on HF10, the Omnibus Transportation Finance and Policy Bill.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

First, we would like to thank you for the one-time general fund appropriations in FY22, specifically the \$5.5 million for the Local Road Improvement Program and the \$14 million for the Local Bridge Replacement Program. The bonding bill that passed last fall included significant investments in these programs, but there are still many projects statewide that will benefit from additional funding. There are over 600 deficient local bridges that need funding over the next three years, and the most recent solicitation for the Local Road Improvement Program received 425 applications totaling \$344 million in requests – well exceeding the \$75 million available in last year’s bonding bill.

We also support the \$10 million for the second daily Amtrak train to Chicago and the \$57.5 million for arterial bus rapid transit. Finally, counties appreciate the reopening of all driver’s license exam locations that were closed due to COVID and the funding necessary to do this.

While we appreciate these investments in roads, bridges, and transit through one-time general fund appropriations, AMC will continue to advocate in the future for a comprehensive transportation funding bill that includes new, dedicated revenue.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

AMC and the Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA) are grateful for the inclusion of the language that provides a statutory clarification for the bridge grant program. The addition of this language will provide clarity when awarding bridge grants by focusing on the total bridge cost estimate instead of the total project cost estimate.

We are also happy to see a few policy items that were not included in the bill, including language that would have created a cost shift to counties for the funding of current and future guideways and language that would have required metro counties that have implemented the local option sales tax to provide a report to the Commissioner on the use of this revenue.

Again, thank you for your work on this bill.

Sincerely,



Emily Murray, Policy Analyst
Association of Minnesota Counties