



March 30, 2023

Dear Chair Hornstein and Members of the House Transportation Committee:

Metro Cities, representing the collective interests of cities in the metropolitan area, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on several provisions contained in HF 2887 (Hornstein), as amended by the DE 1 amendment.

Corridors of Commerce – Metro Cities supports the trunk highway bond funding for the Corridors of Commerce program to help increase capacity on the state’s highway system and help advance economic growth, job creation, and more efficient transportation of goods to and from the metropolitan region.

Municipal State Aid Streets (MSAS) – Metro Cities supports bill provisions that direct additional funding to cities. Metro Cities supports the full dedication of auto parts sales tax revenue, which will benefit MSAS-eligible cities along with other recipients of Highway User Tax Distribution Fund dollars. Metro Cities would support an amendment to the allocation of the retail delivery fee so that the 10 percent directed to MSAS cities flows directly to a Larger Cities Assistance Account to provide MSAS cities more flexibility in the use of those funds.

Small Cities – Metro Cities supports stable funding for cities under 5,000 in population. The DE 1 amendment includes \$38.6 million for the small cities assistance account in FY 2025 with base funding of \$42.4 million beginning in FY 2026. Metro Cities also supports the Small Community Partnerships Program (Article 1, Section 15).

Federal Funds – Metro Cities supports provisions in the bill that will help the state and local governments maximize federal funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS Act. These include establishment of a Federal Transportation Grants Technical Assistance Program, the establishment of an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program, and the IIJA discretionary matching funds included in the DE 1.

State Patrol Aviation – Metro Cities supports the \$14.5 million for the purchase of a new helicopter for the State Patrol and \$1.7 million for staff and equipment costs of pilots for the State Patrol. The use of air support has proven highly effective in the metropolitan region in addressing issues like street racing and carjacking (Article 1, Section 4).

Deputy Registrar Aid – Metro Cities supports the \$3 million each year for payments to deputy registrars, with aid being allocated proportionately based on the number of transactions completed by

each deputy registrar (Article 1, Section 4). Metro Cities supports increases to existing transaction fee levels to ensure that local deputy registrars can sufficiently function and meet evolving service needs.

Transit Funding – Metro Cities supports stable and predictable revenue sources to fund operating and capital expenses for transit providers in the region to meet the needs of residents and to expand the system to areas that lack sufficient transit service options. Metro Cities supports the increase in the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) rate, which will provide additional funding for transit in the metropolitan region.

Safety – Metro Cities appreciates the provisions in this bill that place an emphasis on safety. Metro Cities supports provisions such as the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (Article 4, Section 1), Safe Road Zones (Article 4, Sections 12 and 13), and the Speed Safety Cameras report (Article 4, Section 52).

Climate Action Content Mandate – Metro Cities has concerns with Article 4, Sections 34, 35, and 40. These provisions would mandate certain climate action content be included in the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Development Guide and in local comprehensive plans. Putting these requirements in state law create a one-size-fits-all mandate, and would impede deliberate regional and local processes that go into the setting of comp plan requirements each decade. Many cities in the metropolitan region included climate-related provisions in their 2040 comprehensive plan. In lieu of comprehensive plan requirements, the legislature should incentivize current and new efforts at the local level through climate action grants and other state programs.

Metropolitan Council Governance – Metro Cities acknowledges the establishment of a legislative task force to make recommendations for regional governance and appreciates the inclusion of municipal officials on the task force. With respect to the makeup of the task force and as was discussed in the House State and Local Government Committee, Metro Cities encourages additional city official representation to reflect the number of cities in the region, as well as that cities are responsible for the implementation of the majority of regional policies and decisions.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Lund
Government Relations Specialist
Metro Cities