

# BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN

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**JOEL J. MUELLER**

Chairman - Minnesota State Legislative Board

House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee  
Chair Jon Koznick and Committee Members  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

## **Subject: Opposition to HF 1167 and Support for the Northern Lights Express**

Dear Chair Koznick and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), I am writing to express our strong opposition to House File 1167, which seeks to prohibit expenditures for the Northern Lights Express (NLX) passenger rail project. As an organization that represents the hardworking men and women who keep our nation's railways moving, we know firsthand the economic and transportation benefits that projects like NLX provide. The Northern Lights Express is not just a rail project—it is an opportunity to create good union jobs, strengthen Minnesota's economy, and modernize our transportation system.

### **Creating Good-Paying, Union Jobs**

The NLX will generate significant employment opportunities for railroad workers and other unionized trades, offering high-quality jobs that provide strong wages, benefits, and long-term career stability. This project will:

- Put Skilled Railroad Workers on the Job – The operation of NLX will require experienced locomotive engineers, conductors, and rail maintenance personnel, all of whom are trained professionals dedicated to safety and efficiency.
- Support Thousands of Construction Jobs – Building the necessary infrastructure for NLX will employ union workers across multiple trades, including track workers, electricians, heavy equipment operators, and mechanics.
- Strengthen Apprenticeship and Training Pipelines – Investments in rail infrastructure provide opportunities for the next generation of skilled railroaders, ensuring a strong workforce for Minnesota's transportation future.

### **Enhancing Transportation Safety and Sustainability**

As Minnesota's population grows, we need safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation options. NLX will:

- Reduce highway congestion on I-35, improving road safety and reducing the burden of costly maintenance and repairs.
- Provide a lower-emission alternative to car travel, helping Minnesota meet its environmental and climate goals.

Ensure reliable transportation in all weather conditions, benefiting commuters, students, and travelers year-round.

## **Securing Federal Investment and Strengthening Minnesota's Rail Industry**

The federal government has prioritized passenger rail funding, making this the ideal time for Minnesota to invest in a project like NLX. By prohibiting state expenditures, HF 1167 would effectively block access to substantial federal funding, putting our state at a competitive disadvantage while other regions move forward with modern rail infrastructure.

Rejecting HF 1167 and supporting the Northern Lights Express is a vote for Minnesota's workers, economy, and transportation future. The BLET urges you to stand with us in support of good-paying, union jobs and critical rail investments that will benefit communities across the state.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. We look forward to working with you to advance Minnesota's transportation infrastructure and support the hardworking men and women of the rail industry.

Sincerely,

Joel Mueller

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Mueller', with a stylized, flowing script.

Chairman Minnesota Legislative Board  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen