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March 4, 2021

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

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and the Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on HF1027, the governor's transportation budget recommendations for FY 2022-23.

AMC and MCEA represent all of Minnesota's 87 counties and we have long advocated for the statewide need for increased transportation funding. Each year as our membership considers our legislative priorities, we focus on action items that advance our three principles, including support for state budget solutions that avoid adding or shifting a disproportionate burden to counties through cost shifts, cost shares, and unfunded mandates. One of our top priorities this year, and for the last several years, is support for a comprehensive transportation funding bill that includes new, dedicated revenue for roads, bridges, and transit.

Our concern with the language in HF1027 is that it creates a cost shift to counties for the funding of current and future guideways, removing local control of locally raised tax dollars. At a time when additional funding for the transportation system is so desperately needed, counties shouldn't be required to shoulder these costs on their own.

Our organizations have advocated for additional transportation funding for many years. In 2019 we started the process to focus and unite our statewide message regarding the funding needs on the county system as part of our Bridging Divides Initiative. While our work continues, we remain committed to finding a solution that addresses the funding needs of the entire state transportation system and will continue working together with all transportation stakeholders on a comprehensive transportation funding bill.

Sincerely,

Rich Sve, Lake County Commissioner
President, Association of Minnesota Counties

Brian Giese, Pope County Engineer
President, Minnesota County Engineers Association