



Saint Louis County

Veterans Service Office • Village Mall Office Building
4815 Burning Tree Rd, Ste 100 • Duluth, Minnesota 55811
Phone: (218) 725-5285 • Fax: (218) 723-4678 • www.stlouiscountymn.gov

Nadine Wells
County Veterans Service Officer/Director

7 March 2025

Minnesota House of Representatives Transportation Committee
Chair Representative Jon Koznick
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Support for the Northern Lights Express and Its Importance to Veterans

Dear Chair Koznick and Members of the Transportation Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the development of the Northern Lights Express (NLX) passenger rail service connecting Duluth and Minneapolis and the benefits it would provide to veterans across Minnesota and Wisconsin. As a veteran myself, and a veteran's advocate, I see firsthand the challenges many face in accessing essential services to include employment opportunities and particularly VA healthcare. Reliable transportation is a critical need for veterans who must travel to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center for specialized care, and the NLX would significantly improve their ability to attend medical appointments without the burdens of long, costly, or difficult trips.

Many veterans living in Northern Minnesota rely on the Minneapolis VA for primary and specialty healthcare, including mental health services, surgeries, and ongoing treatments. However, not all veterans have access to personal vehicles or the ability to drive long distances due to age, disability, or financial constraints. Public transportation options between Duluth and the Twin Cities are currently limited, often requiring multiple transfers or long bus rides that are not ideal for those with mobility issues or medical conditions.

A dedicated passenger rail line would provide a safe, dependable, and efficient transportation option for veterans and their families, ensuring they receive the timely and necessary medical care they have earned through their service. Additionally, the NLX would benefit all Minnesotans by creating jobs to stimulate local economies, reducing highway congestion, improving road safety, and providing an environmentally friendly alternative to car travel.

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Virginia, MN 55792
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☐ **Government Services Center**
320 Miners Drive East
Ely, MN 55731
218-365-8203

I urge the committee to prioritize funding and support for the Northern Lights Express. This project represents more than just improved transportation; it is a lifeline for those who have served our country and deserve better access to the healthcare they need. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nadine Wells". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nadine" and last name "Wells" clearly distinguishable.

Nadine Wells
County Veterans Service Officer
Director of St. Louis County Veterans Service Office