

March 15, 2023

State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives

Re: HF2405 and HF2406

Dear Chair Klevorn and Members of the House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee:

The [Minnesota Infrastructure Alliance](#) (formerly MN2050) is a coalition of professional organizations striving to provide and maintain sustainable infrastructure across Minnesota. On behalf of the MN Infrastructure Alliance, and our thousands of members, I am writing to urge your support for HF2405 and HF2406.

Infrastructure includes fundamental facilities and systems necessary for Minnesota's economy to function. Roads, bridges, transit systems, public parks, airports, water and sewer systems, dams, ports, and the energy grid are categories of infrastructure that directly affect our ability to live, work, and play. Infrastructure is the backbone of our state's economy and integral to preserving our high quality of life here.

Most of our systems were built in the late 20th century before much of today's modern technology was developed. Broader adoption of asset management systems can help inform systematic operations, maintenance, and upgrades. Comprehensively tracking the age, repairs, and maintenance status of the infrastructure we have will help control and reduce the need for disruptive emergency improvements.

Much of Minnesota's infrastructure is aging and reaching the end of its expected lifespan. We think these two bills will help infrastructure by making it easier for local governments to be aware of and receive funding, will more equitably distribute funding, and will create more resilient infrastructure.

HF2405, creating the Infrastructure Resilience Advisory Task Force will improve coordination, sustainability, and resiliency of our infrastructure, providing strategies for effective and efficient management of state, local, and private infrastructure.

This Task Force will identify approaches to enhance infrastructure coordination across jurisdictions, agencies, state and local government, and public and private sectors, including planning, design, engineering, construction, maintenance, and operations. We also believe it is important for the state to identify methods to maximize federal formula and discretionary funds provided to recipients in the state for infrastructure purposes and bringing agencies and organizations together will allow for better communication and decision-making.

HF2406, appointing a federal infrastructure coordinator, does exactly what National Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator Mitch Landrieu recommended in his Letter to Governors in January 2022. This coordinator would serve as a centralized point of contact in our state's work to secure the billions of dollars in federal funding that will be available in the next four years. We would greatly improve the

competitiveness of our applications through better agency coordination and project diversity. A state coordinator would bring expertise and leadership and maximize the effectiveness of how funding is obtained and spent.

The grant process is complex and dynamic, containing thousands of project opportunities. Many of the grants are open-ended and will require thoughtful and creative strategizing to secure, so it would benefit our state to have a coordinator who holds the authority and capacity to identify public and private partners, collaborate across agencies, and bring together various constituencies. This person would work with the Governor and his Commissioners to set a vision and plan, engage with neighboring states on regional grants, and promote our commitment to bringing jobs and infrastructure improvements to Minnesota.

The coordinator would serve as our state's representative in their work to highlight infrastructure projects and collaborate with industry leaders. They would provide continuous updates and transparency to the public, along with excitement and appreciation as grants are received and projects approved. They would additionally be a crucial contact and advocate for smaller communities and agencies that lack the resources to hire grant writers, thereby streamlining the process and assisting those whose lack of funds and time normally exclude them from similar federal programs.

We need someone working full-time to maximize Minnesota's ability to compete for and secure federal IJA funds. **Please support HF2406 in appointing a Federal Infrastructure Coordinator.**

Thank you for your consideration. The Minnesota Infrastructure Alliance is here as a resource for you to learn more about infrastructure across the state. Please contact us if you have any questions or needs.

Sincerely,



Michelle Stockness

Professional Civil Engineer

mstockness@barr.com

Minnesota Infrastructure Alliance - Chair

Attachment: About Us - Minnesota Infrastructure Alliance



Minnesota Infrastructure Alliance (MnIA) Mission, Vision, and Goals

February 10, 2023

PARTNERS

American Council of Engineering
Companies of Minnesota
(ACECMN)

Central States Water
Environment Association

City Engineers Association of
Minnesota (CEAM)

Metropolitan Airports
Commission (MAC)

Minnesota Asphalt Pavement
Association (MAPA)

Minnesota Chapter – APWA

Minnesota Council of Airports

Minnesota County Engineers
Association (MCEA)

Minnesota Department of
Transportation (MnDOT)

Minnesota Government
Engineering Council (MGEC)

Minnesota Ports Association

Minnesota Rural Water
Association (MRWA)

Minnesota Section – ASCE

Minnesota Section – AWWA

Minnesota Society of
Professional Engineers

Minnesota Transportation
Alliance

North-Central Section Institute
of Transportation Engineers

Who we are: the [Minnesota Infrastructure Alliance](#) (formerly MN2050) is a coalition of professional organizations striving to provide and maintain sustainable infrastructure across Minnesota.

Mission: To increase awareness of infrastructure and infrastructure needs and articulate a convincing case for increased investment in Minnesota infrastructure through a coordinated voice and communication of unified comprehensive needs.

- Create a compelling message
- Document infrastructure needs and priorities (iterative process)
 - Adapt our project prioritization to acknowledge disadvantaged/marginalized communities and the effects of climate change and extreme weather.
- Educate and engage citizens in solutions



**Increase
public
awareness**



**Enhance
professional
collaboration**



**Educate and
Engage
policy
makers**

Three main Goals for three audiences:

- Increase *public awareness* about the importance and extent of all of our state's infrastructure, why it's important, and why careers in public infrastructure are necessary and valuable.
- Establish a platform to help *professionals* collaborate and advance our infrastructure management message.
- Engage *policy makers* by educating, informing, and influencing sound infrastructure investments via state and local legislators.

For more information contact: Michelle Stockness, MnIA Chair, mstockness@barr.com