



Arc Northland
222 E Superior Street
Suite 302
Duluth MN, 55807

March 7, 2025

Minnesota House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
Chair Jon Koznick (57A) and Committee Members
Minnesota House of Representatives
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Koznick and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Arc Northland and the individuals with disabilities and families we support, 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. Accessible, reliable transportation is a fundamental necessity for people with disabilities, and the NLX represents a transformative investment that will improve mobility and independence for thousands of Minnesotans.

For many individuals with disabilities, transportation barriers limit access to employment, healthcare, education, and community participation. The lack of affordable and accessible long-distance transportation options in Greater Minnesota exacerbates these challenges. The Northern Lights Express will provide a safe, convenient, and fully accessible transportation alternative that will significantly improve mobility for people with disabilities.

How NLX Will Benefit People with Disabilities

- **ADA-Compliant Rail Service** – The Northern Lights Express will be designed to meet and exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, ensuring that passengers with mobility impairments, sensory disabilities, and other accessibility needs have equal access to safe and comfortable transportation.
- **Increased Transportation Options** – Currently, accessible travel between Duluth and the Twin Cities is extremely limited. Public transit options such as buses are often difficult to navigate for those with disabilities, and personal vehicle travel is not always an option. NLX will provide a consistent and reliable alternative.
- **Expanded Access to Employment, Healthcare, and Education** – Reliable transportation is essential for people with disabilities to maintain employment, attend medical appointments, and pursue educational opportunities. The NLX will remove barriers by providing a dependable transit option between major economic and healthcare hubs.

Promoting and protecting the human rights of individuals with disabilities and their families throughout their lifetime.



- **Improved Travel for Caregivers and Support Networks** – Many individuals with disabilities rely on caregivers and family members for transportation. A well-connected passenger rail service will provide greater flexibility and reduce the burden on families and support staff.

Addressing Transportation Equity

Investing in accessible public transportation is a key component of ensuring transportation equity for all Minnesotans. People with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by a lack of mobility options, and the Northern Lights Express is an opportunity to address these disparities. By providing an affordable, accessible, and efficient rail service, Minnesota will be taking an important step toward ensuring that all residents—regardless of ability—can participate fully in society.

A Missed Opportunity if HF 1167 Passes

The federal government has prioritized investment in passenger rail infrastructure, providing Minnesota with a unique opportunity to leverage funding for NLX. Prohibiting state expenditures, as proposed in HF 1167, would prevent our state from accessing these funds, setting back efforts to improve transportation equity for people with disabilities and leaving communities with inadequate transit options.

For these reasons, The Arc Northland urges you to **oppose HF 1167** and support the Northern Lights Express as a critical investment in accessible, equitable transportation for Minnesotans with disabilities. Reliable transit options are a necessity, not a luxury, and the NLX will help ensure that every person—regardless of ability—has the opportunity to travel safely, independently, and with dignity.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to advancing inclusive transportation solutions for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,


Amanda Crosby, Executive Director