



May 3, 2023

Chairs Hornstein and Dibble,

On behalf of the five suburban “collar counties,” we want to thank you for meeting with us last week and listening to our concerns regarding the proposed transportation bill.

As requested, our five collar counties have worked to provide a set of principles and specific legislative language for your consideration. These principles, as articulated, clearly outline our mutual counties’ concerns about the amount of revenue collected from our communities and, consequently, the disproportionate share that is returned to our region.

More specifically, Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott, and Washington Counties receive about 14 percent of the CSAH funds (the addition of Hennepin and Ramsey brings this to a mere 25 percent); Minnesota Department of Transportation/Metro receives, on average, less than 40 percent; and through the Corridors of Commerce program, the collar counties received less than one percent of a fund of \$1 billion. The sales tax, as proposed, appears to follow a very similar pattern, increasing our consternation and creating the impetus to work together.

Our counties propose that 40 percent of the proposed sales tax come back directly to the seven metro Counties for transportation purposes. This streamlined approach will allow these funds to be used in a much more cohesive, efficient manner. Moreover, providing flexibility in the use of these funds allows transit as well as active transportation and highway projects to move forward (in the most rapidly growing areas of the metro) while still supporting the metropolitan transit system.

Further, we have amply demonstrated that the Corridors of Commerce program provides very little substantive relief to the collar counties, which are currently spending their TAB and Local Option Sales Tax dollars on MNDOT Trunk Highways in their communities. The proposal to fund a minimum of 30 percent (up to 35 percent) in the five collar counties would introduce some level of equity back to the MNDOT metro district.

Clearly, safety is a primary concern on many of these corridors. Our proposal includes building on the Corridors of Safety that was heard by the House Transportation Committee – which further projects that help in crash reduction.

Finally, before continuing to expand the transit system in the metropolitan area, the region should complete a comprehensive study of the need and use following the COVID pandemic. In an era in which traffic patterns and transit use seem forever altered to one degree or another, it benefits us to have a better understanding of the needs, usage, and appropriate funding sources and levels.

We thank you for continuing to work with us on these critically important issues.