



March 3, 2021

Representative Frank Hornstein
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HF 1027, the Governor's omnibus transportation recommendations for FY 2022-23. As county board chairs of Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington Counties, whose collective populations make up close to 50 percent of the state's population, we understand the critical role transportation plays in the daily lives of Minnesotans and the need to deliver safe, efficient, and equitable travel options. As a result, we strongly support transportation infrastructure that improves access to jobs and markets and helps us compete economically into the future.

Minnesota Counties are responsible for critical arteries in the state's transportation system and rely heavily on state funding to maintain and improve our road and bridge infrastructure. Metro counties have also made significant investments in the metro transit system, partnering closely with the Metropolitan Council. Metro counties have invested more than \$2 billion in transit guideway projects, including the Blue Line LRT, Green Line LRT, Orange Line BRT, Northstar Commuter Rail, and Southwest LRT. In turn, this investment has secured over \$2.5 billion dollars in federal funds for our region, supported thousands of jobs, and constructed the backbone of the transit system. We are also committing significant future investment to expand the system by funding the Gold Line BRT, Blue Line Extension LRT, Rush Line BRT and Riverview Corridor. These project investments will make the system more equitable by providing high-quality transit to underserved communities, improve travel times, expand access to jobs, and reduce carbon emissions.

The proposed County Responsibility for Guideway Funding policy change in HF 1027, would dramatically shift the funding partnership between the Met Council and counties for transit expenses. The policy would remove local control of locally raised tax dollars and would make counties legally responsible for all costs to build, operate, and maintain transit guideways not covered by other sources. With the county resources serving as a blank check, this policy would jeopardize our ability to exercise fiscal oversight and constrain our ability to expand the metro's transit system. The result would be to undo the longstanding partnership between the Met Council and counties that has allowed our region's transit system to make transformative improvements.

Minnesota's transportation system needs additional funding and broad consensus must be built to fund the construction, maintenance, and operation costs of our transportation infrastructure. As county leaders, we are committed to working collectively with our county partners, MnDOT, the Met Council, business community, and residents to help find solutions to the funding challenges the transportation system faces.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Scott Schulte
Chair, Anoka County Board



Marion Greene
Chair, Hennepin County Board



Toni Carter
Chair, Ramsey County Board



Lisa Weik
Chair, Washington County Board

Cc: House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee Members