

30 March 2023

Chair Frank Hornstein

Transportation Finance and Policy Committee

Minnesota House of Representatives

Dear Chair Hornstein and members of the Transportation Committee,

I am writing in support of the proposed Transportation Omnibus Bill, HF 2887 as amended by the DE1. In particular, I support this bill's significant investments in Twin Cities transit and statewide passenger rail.

Transit is my primary method of transportation. Having access to an extensive transit network has enabled me to attend college classes, work, and care for my family, without the expenses of owning a car. This in turn has provided me with considerable financial flexibility. If I needed to have a car, it would make it much harder to afford my essentials and pay rent on time.

Recently, it has become much harder to get where I need to go due to the driver shortage-related service cuts. While these cuts are temporary, they provide a preview of what transit could look like if the funding in this bill is not provided. With the cost of living rising and the climate crisis intensifying, we cannot afford to shortchange transit. Instead, by implementing the provisions in this bill, the transit system will be able to expand to better serve existing riders and accommodate new ones, providing the opportunity and financial freedom that I have benefitted from to more people across Minnesota.

I am also supportive of provisions within the bill that would improve the transit experience, such as the transit safety provisions and the working group on transit signal priority. I encourage the committee to consider adding light rail to the scope of the working group. The Green and Blue Lines are the state's busiest and second-busiest transit routes, and were constructed at considerable cost to the public, yet trains often sit for several minutes at red lights. Light rail is the most efficient and resilient mode we have, and it should be prioritized over cars at all intersections.

Thank you for considering this transformational bill. Transit provides opportunity and freedom to its users, and these aspects must be maintained and expanded to respond to the cost-of-living and climate crises. I encourage members to support this bill and future efforts to strengthen transit.

Thank you,

W. Patrick Brick

Minneapolis