

## Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail – Making Connections

### Examples of Business Supporters

North 65 Chamber of Commerce  
Duluth Chamber  
Anoka Area Chamber  
Minneapolis Chamber  
Minneapolis Downtown Council  
Duluth Downtown Council  
GPS:45:93  
East Central Regional Development  
Commission  
Duluth Seaway Port Authority

### Examples of Labor Supporters

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and  
Trainmen  
Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation  
MN State Building and Construction Trade  
Council  
Duluth Building and Construction Trade  
Council  
IBEW MN State Council

### Higher Ed & Nonprofit Supporters

Pine Technical & Community College  
Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center  
The College of St. Scholastica  
Lake Superior College  
University of Wisconsin, Superior  
University of Minnesota, Duluth  
Anoka-Ramsey Community College





The Honorable Timothy Walz  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher  
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

November 8, 2021

Dear Governor Walz and Commissioner Anderson Kelliher:

We write to you today in support of America's #1 shovel-ready rail project, the Northern Lights Express (NLX), a passenger rail project connecting the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul with the Port Cities of Duluth and Superior.

In 2019, Amtrak's Joe McHugh, vice president of state-supported services, praised the years of work done on the project, and called it "one of the most shovel-ready projects in the nation."

The NLX project has long been supported by cities, counties, a tribal nation, businesses and industry, and many other stakeholders along the rail corridor from Minneapolis to Duluth and Superior. The working women and men of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council are pleased to offer our support to this great project.

After nearly two decades of visioning, this project is ready to go. Soon, with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, billions of dollars will be available to complete intercity passenger rail projects like the Northern Lights Express. We urge the Walz Administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to act quickly in seeking these federal funds and developing a 5-year plan to complete this project.

The NLX project in Minnesota and Wisconsin is ready to go. We are ready to put men and women in the trades to work on the project and we are ready to begin moving people and product throughout the rail corridor. This passenger rail line will connect students to colleges and universities. This rail line will connect thousands of veterans from northern Minnesota and Wisconsin with V.A. healthcare. This will be a connection for tourists and business commuters.

In the words of President Biden, "support for rail travel goes beyond the emotional connection. With delays at our airports and congestion on our roads becoming increasingly ubiquitous, volatile fuel prices, increased environmental awareness, and a need for transportation links between growing communities, rail travel is more important to America than ever before."

We urge you to make this rail project a priority in the next Legislative session and work aggressively to seek these new federal rail dollars once they become available.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Tom Dicklich  
Executive Director



# IBEW MINNESOTA STATE COUNCIL

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**Local Union 506, IBEW**  
Morgan Carpenter, Local Chairman  
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The Honorable Timothy Walz  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher  
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

February 8, 2022

Dear Governor Walz and Commissioner Anderson Kelliher:

We write to you today in support of America's #1 shovel-ready rail project, the Northern Lights Express (NLX), a passenger rail project connecting the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul with the Port Cities of Duluth and Superior.

In 2019, Amtrak's Joe McHugh, vice president of state-supported services, praised the years of work done on the project, and called it "one of the most shovel-ready projects in the nation."

The NLX project has long been supported by cities, counties, a tribal nation, businesses and industry, and many other stakeholders along the rail corridor from Minneapolis to Duluth and Superior. The working women and men of the IBEW MN State Council are pleased to offer our support to this great project.

The IBEW represents workers in the electrical industry that will be included throughout several jurisdictional scopes of work utilized in the project. IBEW represented Railroad, Utility, Electricians, Communications and Signal and Control workers that will be working on this project.

After nearly two decades of visioning, this project is ready to go. With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, billions of dollars will be available to complete intercity passenger rail projects like the Northern Lights Express. We urge the Walz Administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to act quickly in seeking these federal funds and developing a 5-year plan to complete this project.

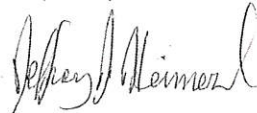
February 8, 2022  
Page 2

The NLX project in Minnesota and Wisconsin is ready to go. We are ready to put men and women in the Electrical Industry to work on the project and we are ready to begin moving people throughout the rail corridor. This passenger rail line will connect students to colleges and universities. This rail line will connect thousands of veterans from northern Minnesota and Wisconsin with V.A. healthcare. This will be a connection for tourists and business commuters. In addition, not only will this project provide job opportunities while building the NLX project, it will also contribute to countless jobs from development and construction of transit oriented development along the line.

We urge you to make this rail project a priority in the next Legislative session and work aggressively to seek these new federal rail dollars once they become available.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeffrey D. Meimenz".

# GPS::45:93

YOUR POINT OF OPPORTUNITY.

March 2, 2022

Bob Manzoline, Executive Director  
NLX Passenger Rail Alliance  
111 Station 44 Rd  
Eveleth, MN 55734

Dear Mr. Manzoline,

On behalf of GPS 45:93 I am pleased to write this letter of support and encourage the NLX Alliance, our legislators, and our governor to pursue funding now while federal dollars are available, but competitive. Your continuing leadership is crucial for Minnesota to benefit from the dollars in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act enacted by Congress.

GPS 45:93 is a regional economic development consortium strategically located along interstate 35 between Minneapolis/St. Paul and Duluth. Our location places us within two hours of over 80% of the state's population. Membership includes businesses, schools, nonprofits, member counties of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, and Pine plus cities of Mora, Rush City, Hinckley, North Branch, Princeton, Isanti, Pine City, and Sandstone, and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

As a nonprofit organization, we are dedicated to growing and attracting businesses with high-paying jobs to East Central Minnesota. We collaborate to strengthen the regional economy by providing a regional approach to workforce development, business attraction, retention, and expansion.

Transportation is key to our mission. NLX provides a choice for travel that is safe, convenient, reliable, and environmentally friendly.

NLX is the kind of asset we need to add to our toolbox for prosperity in East Central Minnesota. Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,



Sandy Voigt, Women's Business Alliance Director  
2022 GPS 45:93 President



January 10, 2022

Bob Manzoline, Executive Director  
NLX Passenger Rail Alliance  
111 Station 44 Rd  
Eveleth, MN 55734

Dear Mr. Manzoline,

The East Central Regional Development Commission (ECRDC) voted unanimously to refresh their support for the Northern Lights Express passenger rail project and the associated request to the Minnesota legislature for \$85 million in matched funds.

The ECRDC works extensively through our Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) to improve coordination between transportation providers and service agencies to fill gaps in our transportation system. This involves identifying new ways to provide customers with more options of when and where to travel. We see the proposed NLX passenger rail project as another exciting opportunity to connect with transportation options that extend beyond the boundaries of our east-central region.

Our region stands to benefit greatly from the NLX project with reduced traffic congestion on our state and county roadways; providing a safer option for travel; contributing to a cleaner environment; and increasing tourism to the area. We are confident that veterans, senior citizens, students, tourists, and commuters will all want to take advantage of this cost-effective transportation option.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to make the NLX project a reality.

Yours most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Voss", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert L. Voss  
Executive Director



*Office of the President*

January 10, 2022

Mr. Bob Manzoline, Executive Director  
NLX Alliance  
111 Station 44 Road  
Eveleth, MN 55734

Dear Mr. Manzoline,

We are writing in support of the Northern Lights Express Project, (NLX). With six proposed stations, including locations in our campus cities of Cambridge and Coon Rapids, the NLX system would open up opportunities for Minnesotans to attend college that might not otherwise have the chance due to transportation and/or distance limitations. An increase in college enrollment would also stimulate job growth and economic growth for the Cambridge and Coon Rapids areas.

As an institution that supports environmental sustainability, we are very interested in the benefits that the NLX project would offer. Providing mass commuter options would help reduce the carbon footprint of employees and students of Anoka-Ramsey Community College. Students would also have the option of commuting between campuses, opening up the opportunity of taking classes at the other campus, connecting with other students and engaging in additional student experiences. Utilizing NLX would also allow students time to study while commuting in a safe and comfortable environment.

We appreciate your work on behalf of the Northern Lights Express and look forward to watching the project create momentum.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kent Hanson in black ink.

Kent Hanson, Ph.D.  
President  
Anoka Technical College  
Anoka-Ramsey Community College

Handwritten signature of Steve Crittenden in black ink.

Steve Crittenden  
Interim Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs  
Anoka-Ramsey Community College

Handwritten signature of Shannon Kirkeide in black ink.

Shannon Kirkeide  
Dean of Academic and Community Outreach  
Anoka-Ramsey Community College

CAMBRIDGE CAMPUS  
300 Spirit River Dr S, Cambridge, MN 55008  
763-433-1100 • 763-433-1841 FAX

COON RAPIDS CAMPUS  
11200 Mississippi Blvd NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55433  
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**Nicholas J Katich**  
Legislative Director,  
Chairperson

**Robert L Dickerson**  
Assistant Director

**Brian L. Hunstad**  
Secretary



SMART-TD Minnesota  
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## *Minnesota Legislative Board*

The Honorable Timothy Walz  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher  
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

November 17, 2021

Dear Governor Walz and Commissioner Anderson Kelliher,

On behalf of SMART-TD (Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Union-Transportation Division) representing Railroad Conductors, Engineers, and Yardmasters working in Minnesota, I'm writing in support of the Northern Lights Express passenger rail initiative.

The tremendous amount of work done by many groups and individuals over the last 20 years to advance this plan is paying off. NLX is a ready-to-go project at a time when our nation is embracing public transportation by train.

Northern Lights Express will carry children from northern Minnesota to the robust network of children's hospitals in the Twin Cities Metro without fear of bad weather or animal strikes on the I-35 corridor. This project will connect veterans to the VA, students will be able to commute to and from school on a more regular basis, and sports fans can get to the stadiums. Duluth is the gateway to the beautiful arrowhead region of our great state and NLX is the connection for our Minnesotans looking to get out of the metro and enjoy our natural wonders.

In the past month, I have personally ridden the Blue Line in Chicago, The South Shore Line from Chicago to Michigan City, and AMTRAK's Wolverine to Detroit. Experiencing established routes first hand has strengthened my excitement for passenger rail service. Seeing the diversity of commuters on these trains illustrated to me NLX is truly for all Minnesotans.

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The passage of the Infrastructure and Jobs Act of 2021 included 16 billion dollars that Minnesota can get a piece of, if we act swiftly and decisively. While NLX is the only project on a list of 28 that is ready to go, there will be competition. We urge you to prioritize Northern Lights Express in the next legislative session and seize the opportunity before us to connect our Minnesota cities via passenger rail.

The working men and women of SMART-TD stand ready. We will be proud to crew and staff the trains operating as Northern Lights Express.

Thank you for making time to consider our position. We ask that you reach out to us with any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Nicholas Katich  
MN Legislative Director  
SMART-TD



Pine Technical &  
Community College

December 28, 2021

Mr. Bob Manzoline, Executive Director  
NLX Alliance  
111 Station 44 Road  
Eveleth, MN 55734

Dear Mr. Manzoline,

I am writing to endorse the Northern Lights Express Project, a passenger rail project connecting the Twin Cities with communities Coon Rapids, Cambridge, Hinckley, Duluth and Superior.

Train service would provide a beneficial transportation alternative for many students, staff and faculty, including members of the community. In addition, it will provide transportation to outstate veterans needing access to services in the Twin Cities.

This service will have an overall positive impact on the quality of life by supporting rural communities and fostering new growth. Thank you for your work on behalf of the Northern Lights Express.

Sincerely,

Joe Mulford  
President



81 south 9th st  
suite 260  
mpls, mn 55402

January 21st, 2022

Jill C Brown  
Northern Lights Express Alliance  
111 Station 44 Road  
Eveleth, MN 55734

Dear Jill,

We are writing you to express our strong support for the Northern Lights Express passenger rail proposal.

The Mpls Downtown Council is a member-supported business organization focused on creating an extraordinary downtown for all who live, work, play and explore our city. Downtown Minneapolis and its five neighborhoods are currently home to 218,325 workers and 53,093 residents while typically welcoming approximately 30 million visitors each year.

As a business-led organization focused on the largest downtown in the state of Minnesota, our enthusiasm for becoming a terminus for the Northern Lights Express (NLX) cannot be overstated. Beyond the global benefits this project will provide to our state in terms of investment and accessibility, there are three main connections behind this wholehearted support:

### **1. The connection between MSP Airport and Duluth**

Downtown Minneapolis benefits greatly from a strong light-rail connection to Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport. Minnesota's largest airport had nearly 15 million passengers in 2020 and the Metro Blue Line offers one of the most seamless, convenient connections from an international airport to a major downtown in the country. That transit link connects travelers directly to Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis where NLX trains will depart for Duluth. NLX will leverage this existing infrastructure to connect some of the most popular destinations in our state with a high-quality service. The transfer point on this journey? Downtown Minneapolis, home to the largest concentration of hotel beds in the state, world-class dining and entertainment, and other amenities.

### **2. The connection between the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region and Duluth**

Motivated by a goal of leading the nation in transportation options, we have been advocating for new transit investments in our region for the past decade. Thanks to state and federal support, our downtown's strong growth over the timeframe has been accompanied and spurred by a series of high-quality, convenient transit connections between downtown and surrounding communities. These investments

have made Downtown Minneapolis the best-connected place for transit service in a region of 3.6 million people. The network effects that NLX would create for all of these places connected to our downtown by light rail, bus rapid transit, and commuter rail services are astounding. This is much more than a point-to-point connection - we are working with our partners in the public sector towards Downtown Minneapolis becoming a hub in a high-quality transit network that serves and benefits our metropolitan area, and those connections will also allow NLX to benefit the broader region.

### **3. The connection between Downtown Minneapolis and Duluth**

While self-interest is a factor in the first two reasons, it is front and center for the third - we want to take the Northern Lights Express! We want people who live, work, and play in Downtown Minneapolis to be able to visit Duluth and other cities along the route and vice versa. We want the fans of the Minnesota Twins, Timberwolves, Lynx, and Vikings in northern Minnesota to be able to visit Minneapolis for a game by rail, and the same goes for people who want to see a concert by the MN Orchestra, or any number of our other cultural offerings. We want it to be easy and convenient for our neighbors to visit Duluth, a major regional tourism center, and our state's scenic treasure, the North Shore of Lake Superior. We want students at the University of Minnesota from Northern Minnesota to be able to travel to and from school by train, and the same goes for students from Minneapolis attending the University of Minnesota Duluth. We want the number of trips between our city and Duluth to multiply and the connections between our communities to deepen without expanding congestion on the highways between us.

We see this as a major priority for our state and our local community and we will gladly add our voice to the chorus requesting that the state legislature prioritize funding for NLX in the upcoming session.



Steve Cramer  
mpls downtown council  
President & CEO



# Osprey Wilds

Environmental Learning Center

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The Honorable Timothy Walz  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher  
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

January 20, 2022

Dear Governor Walz and Commissioner Anderson Kelliher,

On behalf of Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center, I am writing to express my strong support of the Northern Lights Express (NLX) passenger rail system. This opportunity would provide so many economic and quality of life benefits to the citizens and communities of Minnesota. With all of the work that has gone into this project over the last 20 years, it is primed for construction and actualization.

I attended several meetings for NLX when we were working to get funds from the 2009 Stimulus Bill, which ultimately did not occur for this project. The passage of the Infrastructure and Jobs Act of 2021 included 16 billion dollars for Minnesota to now address this pressing need, as well as this amazing opportunity. The NLX is America's #1 shovel ready project as stated by Amtrak and I urge you to prioritize Northern Lights Express in the next legislative session and seize the opportunity before us to connect our Minnesota cities via passenger rail.

Osprey Wilds hosts 100 K-12 schools annually with 4,000 K-12 learners at our campus five miles west of Sandstone. Currently, schools travel in buses to get here. But it would make it so much more accessible, cheaper and faster if those students could board the NLX in the Twin Cities and arrive in Sandstone, with just a short bus ride out to our campus. We see the potential for many more schools wanting to do field trips if they had access to light rail and did not have to deal with the staffing and financial implications of bussing students up here and back. It would make the trip more feasible in many ways, and add to more economic growth to the area for Arrowhead Transit Services, local businesses, and Osprey Wilds.

Please push for funding for NLX with your strongest ability. Minnesota would be so much for the better to have light rail connecting the Twin Cities to the Twin Ports for so many reasons. I hope you share that sentiment and will work to secure funding for this important opportunity.

Sincerely,

Bryan Wood  
Executive Director



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E-Mail: [admin@duluthport.com](mailto:admin@duluthport.com) ■ [www.duluthport.com](http://www.duluthport.com)

February 26, 2020

Representative Mary Murphy, Chair  
MN House Capital Investment Committee  
343 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Letter of Support – H.F. 2838 Grassy Point Railroad Bridge Rehabilitation Funding

Dear Representative Murphy:

On behalf of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for H.F. 2838 Grassy Point Railroad Bridge Rehabilitation Funding.

The Port of Duluth-Superior is the largest U.S. port on the Great Lakes and one of the largest marine gateways for U.S. trade with Canada, the number-one trade partner of Minnesota and the nation. The port is located on the western tip of Lake Superior and the St. Lawrence Seaway, one of the nation's principal free trade corridors. The port is served by the intersection of three major highway corridors between Minnesota and Wisconsin (I-35, US-53, and US-2) and four Class I railroads (CN, BNSF, CP, and UP).

The Grassy Point Railroad Bridge is critical infrastructure supporting economic growth and the free flow of goods and services in and out of the Duluth port and northeast Minnesota. The Grassy Point Railroad Bridge crosses the port's federal navigational channel and provides an essential rail connection to Duluth's industrial landscape on Rice's Point.

The Grassy Point Railroad Bridge, during normal use, routinely swings to allow railcar movement or marine traffic depending on need. Closures due to bridge failures and emergency repairs could, if the bridge is in position for railcar movement, effectively close a navigable shipping channel and negatively influence regional commodity movement as well as vessel traffic through the Duluth port.

The Grassy Point Railroad Bridge also acts as the critical rail connection to many rail-served businesses on Duluth's Rice's Point including Duluth Seaway Port Authority's Clure Public Marine Terminal. Our Clure Terminal alone handles \$300 million in goods via the bridge – these materials support countless industries, manufacturers and service providers throughout our region and beyond. Nearly one hundred percent of rail cars handled throughout Rice's Point and the Clure Terminal must cross the Grassy Point Railroad Bridge to enter the goods they carry into commerce. Closures due to bridge failures and emergency repairs disrupt the critical supply chain for goods and negatively impact Minnesota businesses.

The Duluth Seaway Port Authority promotes efficient, safe, and economical handling of commerce in the region. As the most inland seaway port in the nation, the Duluth Port is uniquely positioned to leverage major highway and railroad corridors, and seaway-depth access to global markets. Midwestern businesses benefit through reduced supply chain costs and access to customers worldwide. The Grassy Point Railroad Bridge Rehabilitation Project strengthens the reliability of the transportation network that serves hundreds of rural communities across northern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration and support of H.F.2838.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah B. DeLuca". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Deborah B. DeLuca  
Executive Director



March 2, 2020

Mr. Bob Manzoline, Executive Director  
NLX Alliance  
111 Station 44 Road  
Eveleth, MN 55734

Dear Mr. Manzoline,

We are writing to endorse the Northern Lights Express Project, which would benefit Northland and Twin Cities residents alike. As leaders of Twin Ports higher education institutions, we encourage our policymakers to continue the process of securing project approval and necessary funding.

One of the factors influencing the college selection process for many of our students is that Duluth-Superior is “the right distance” from home. In other words, they want to remain close to family and be able to come home for visits. Despite the relatively short distance, many students find it challenging to get to and from the Twin Cities. Train service would provide a beneficial transportation alternative for our students, including those who are veterans needing access to veteran services in the Twin Cities.

As you probably know, rail transportation has the lowest carbon footprint per passenger mile of any form of mass transit. Northern Lights Express would be consistent with our region’s belief in sustainability and being good stewards of the environment in which we live. We all support promoting sustainable practices among students, faculty, and staff.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the Northern Lights Express.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. McDonald  
The College of St. Scholastica  
President



Patricia L. Rogers  
Lake Superior College  
President



Lendley C. Black  
University of Minnesota, Duluth  
Chancellor



Renée M. Wachter  
University of Wisconsin, Superior  
Chancellor

October 26, 2021

**Resolution**

Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail Project

**Whereas**, the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes adequate and improved transportation is key to economic stimulation and growth for Minnesota, and

**Whereas**, we have a long-term future vision for our community as a vibrant area with multi-modal transportation options to provide cost effective alternatives for area businesses and employees, as well as senior citizens, veterans and students, and

**Whereas**, the Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail proposal would travel from Minneapolis to Duluth, and

**Whereas**, early studies indicate the project could stimulate \$2 billion in investments in the 155-mile corridor, and

**Whereas**, the income benefit associated with Northern Lights Express is conservatively estimated to be \$11 billion over 30 years from the creation of 415 thousand personal years of work, and

**Whereas**, property value benefits are estimated at \$2+ billion, and

**Whereas**, the project has already earned several million dollars in state and federal support, plus the distinct recognition by a national panel as one of the top eight corridors in the country worthy of immediate development, and

**Whereas**, up to 80 percent in federal funds may be available for construction, currently estimated at \$400+ million,

**Therefore, be it resolved that** the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports the Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail Project.

**Be it further resolved** that the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce supports the project's request to the Minnesota Legislature for a 20% match to federal rail dollars included in the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, to advance the project into construction.

Respectfully submitted,



Matt Baumgartner  
President

City of Rutledge, Minnesota

PO Box 124

Willow River, MN 55795

To Whom it May Concern:

City council of Rutledge, Minnesota fully supports the NXL project with a stop in Sandstone due to the needed service to the local community and the economic impact that it will have to our area. After discussions of the impact and potential downfalls of the project it is our understanding that this support does not come with any financial backing.

Thank you,

City Council of Rutledge

*Lynette Hischer,*  
Clerk

