

Good afternoon Cyndy, my name is Rox. I am sending you this email to state that I am testifying against the HF269 and HF749 proposals which aim to terminate the Northstar commuter rail service operated by Metro Transit.

I have called previously regarding my disapproval of these bills, but I felt that my arguments would be better stated if I were to write them down, as they'd provide more clear reasoning as to why I am testifying against HF 269 and HF 749.

I feel that cutting funding for these services is very short sighted as they provide a safe alternative for people commuting to work or using Northstar as alternatives to going in and out of the Twin Cities. This will only lead to increasing traffic on our highways as well as cause a burden for people who use the service frequently. Many cities across the country have found success in retaining, maintaining, and developing commuter rail operations. Even in our state we have seen the potential that rail services have with the record breaking success of the Borealis operating from St. Paul to Milwaukee and Chicago. In the past, we would have been able to make Northstar a much more thriving service, but the state of what the service is now was due to politicians such as Mark Olson focusing their efforts into the failed "Taxi 2000" PRT proposal back in 2003. The service itself never came into fruition, and thus the Northstar has not been able to achieve its original plan of terminating in St. Cloud. Despite this however, Northstar was able to stick around even with these limitations. Rather than defunding Northstar, we should instead follow through with working towards the proposed St. Cloud extension. This would provide many economic and quality of life benefits for the citizens from Stearns county up to Hennepin county. By cutting off the Northstar services, we are barring ourselves from providing Minnesotans access to the services they deserve in order to help our state thrive.

- Rox Everingham