



March 10, 2026

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

On behalf of The Open Door, I am writing to express our support for the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) and the continued operation of suburban transit providers serving communities across the south metro.

The Open Door is a hunger relief nonprofit serving Dakota County and surrounding communities. Each month, we support more than 23,000 individuals through our pantry, mobile food distributions, and community partnerships. A consistent theme we hear from neighbors is that transportation is a major barrier to accessing food and other essential services. Reliable transit plays a critical role in helping people reach that support, and for those without access to a personal vehicle, it can mean the difference between reaching a food pantry or going without.

MVTA is an important part of that connection. The routes and services they provide help residents across Dakota County and the south metro reach essential services safely and reliably. At The Open Door, we have also seen the direct impact of MVTA's partnership through programs that provide transit access for neighbors traveling to our pantry and other food resources.

Suburban transit providers like MVTA were designed to meet the unique transportation needs of suburban communities, where services are often spread across a wider geographic area. Their work helps ensure that seniors, working families, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing economic hardship can access the resources they need.

Proposals that would eliminate suburban "opt-out" transit providers risk disrupting these critical connections and creating additional barriers for residents who are already navigating significant challenges.

We encourage policymakers to preserve suburban transit providers like MVTA and continue supporting transportation systems that allow residents to access food, employment, healthcare, and other essential services.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our communities.

Sincerely,
Jason Viana
Executive Director
The Open Door

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