

Testimony from Sunrise Saint Paul on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act:

With what has been referred to as once-in-a-generation funding, it is paramount that the money being received by the state of Minnesota is allocated to projects and infrastructure that prioritize climate resiliency, equity, and the future. While it is important to repair and restore existing transportation infrastructure to improve safety and accessibility, it is not enough to address current conditions. We must be proactive and prepare for upcoming climate challenges in order to create a place where all Minnesotans can thrive.

Minnesota's largest source of pollution is transportation, and this funding is an opportunity to drive down those emissions. We can start by envisioning a future beyond personal vehicle culture and look towards electrifying transportation. It is proven that electric vehicles (EVs) save money over the long term because they require less maintenance and have lower costs for fueling vehicles, all while having a growing capacity to tow heavy loads. With \$68 million of funds allocated for Minnesota to install Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE), state agencies like MnDOT and the Department of Commerce will have to strategically target gaps in access to public EV charging stations. Current gaps in the Minnesota EV charging network are stark in rural Minnesota, especially in the Northwest region of the state. In order to create reliable and accessible charging throughout the state, we must see a focus on EVSE deployment in greater Minnesota, not just the Twin Cities. Additionally, with \$818 million allocated towards public transportation in Minnesota, there must be a focus on electrifying medium- to heavy-duty vehicles as well as school buses, transit buses, and paratransit vehicles. We typically think of public transportation being buses and trains, but many rely on other forms of transportation such as paratransit vehicles and emergency vehicles. Electrified transportation must be diversified beyond personal vehicles, and work towards serving and connecting historically marginalized communities.

Minnesota is set to receive \$6.8 billion from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and could see more through competitive grants. The memo presented by the Federal Transportation Administration outlines several strategies that support our perspective on how this infrastructure money should be spent. This memo asks for the consideration of both immediate and long term environmental impacts when deciding on infrastructure investments. While following through with this in the planning process is important, environmental and climate impacts need to be monitored and revisited as projects are implemented as well.

Because the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act fails to provide funds for adequate investments into preparing for upcoming climate challenges, it is extremely important that the allocation of existing funds are made carefully and effectively, prioritizing long-lasting infrastructure that can be expanded with future funding. As young Minnesotans, we will face the long term impacts of these investments, and we need them to be resilient. We don't want to be dealing with the same infrastructure issues in a few decades due to lack of foresight.

Decisions made about infrastructure investment this session will impact lives for decades to come. Movements of young people here in Minnesota and across the US demand investments in us—into our futures. The climate crisis will not only further environmental injustice and inequality, but impact each and every single one of our lives. As much as we believe money from the IIJA is not nearly enough to comprehensively fund climate and equity initiatives, it is a good place to start. Our futures are being built on the decisions that are made by you all in this room, and we implore you to take this responsibility seriously. We fight today, and will continue to fight everyday, for a just and livable world. Thank you.