

May 1, 2023

Dear Transportation Conference Committee Members:

On behalf of the City of Cambridge, I am writing you today in support of the Northern Lights Express passenger rail project connecting the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul to the Twin Ports of Duluth, MN and Superior, WI. Cambridge would be the second stop north from Minneapolis along this corridor, and we could not be more excited about the opportunities it would provide.

First, thank you to the Minnesota House and Senate for including funding for the NLX project in your Omnibus Transportation Bill!

A tremendous amount of work has been done by many groups and individuals to get this project to where it is today. The timing could not be better with significant federal funds available to complete the project. With so many people realizing the environmental benefits of passenger rail service as well as the convenience of traveling by train, many citizens in our state are embracing public transportation therefore reducing the number vehicles on our roads.

The Northern Lights Express will carry veterans from Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin to the Twin Cities where they are able to easily access the VA hospital in Minneapolis. Students will be able commute to and from many of Minnesota's distinguished Colleges and Universities on a regular basis. This rail project will allow sports fans to be able to get to all the stadiums in the metro area. With Duluth being the gateway to the natural wonders of Minnesota's arrowhead, many vacationers will be using this service to get there. With more workers realizing the benefits of working from home this project will also allow for workforce development outside the metro area.

The Northern Lights Express is the most shovel ready passenger rail projects in the nation. The funding for this project would access federal dollars for this project and seize the opportunity to connect the Twin Ports with the Twin Cities via passenger rail.

This is the year to get the Northern Lights Express funded. As I said in my testimony to both the senate and house transportation committees, this project provides opportunity, equity, and reliability. We urge you to adopt the House position, fully funding the NLX project, so that the state may move forward accessing 80% in federal funds to build NLX now.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our position on this project.

Sincerely,



Evan Vogel, City Administrator
City of Cambridge
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