

Dear Chair Hornstein and Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony. The following relates specifically to Section 13 of HF3436. Section 13 begins with “Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 174.03, subdivision 12, is amended to read: Subd. 12. Trunk highway performance, resiliency, and sustainability.”

Section 13 needs to be deleted from HF3436 so that our existing state statute remains unchanged. This statute requires transparency and accountability as MnDOT spends billions of dollars. The legislature must have clear and accurate information from MnDOT so that our elected representatives can make well informed decisions.

The changes proposed in Section 13 were initiated by a handful of MnDOT bureaucrats. As you understand, the frontline staff at MnDOT works very hard every year to construct and maintain our roads and bridges. These employees collect a huge amount of information every year and these employees are expecting that this annual information be used by MnDOT planners to improve the future performance of our roads and bridges. This is precisely what the existing state statute requires (annual use of annual measurements).

Please do not let a handful of bureaucrats undermine the hard work of thousands of MnDOT employees. Please do not let these bureaucrats prevent the legislature from seeing the information that our elected representatives rightfully expect MnDOT to honestly share.

Section 13 of HF3436 undermines the effectiveness of the existing state statute 174.03 subdivision 12. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/174.03> The opening sentence summarizes the legislature’s intent. “The commissioner must implement performance measures and annual targets for the trunk highway system in order to construct resilient infrastructure, enhance the project selection for all transportation modes, improve economic security, and achieve the state transportation goals established in section 174.01.” This statute requires MnDOT to deliver information to the legislature that is necessary for our elected leaders to make well informed decisions.

The people of Minnesota rightfully expect our government to promote the common values of Minnesotans. These values include honesty and integrity. Minnesotans also expect MnDOT to embody honesty and integrity as MnDOT delivers the transportation infrastructure that Minnesotans expect to improve economic security and be resilient for decades to come. To enhance the people’s confidence in our government it is essential that MnDOT demonstrates integrity and implements ethical policies, which fully comply with federal and state statutes.

The people of Minnesota rightfully expect MnDOT to:

- Provide clear, transparent, and timely information that will empower the people with knowledge.
- Effectively collaborate in full partnership with the people to identify problems and craft effective solutions.
- Implement protocols that guarantee ethical action during policy development and deployment.
- Comply with existing statutes and recommend improvements that strengthen ineffective statutes.

Please do not let a handful of MnDOT bureaucrats undermine the hard work of thousands of current employees and all the retirees who served for decades building and maintaining our roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure. Minnesotans expect our elected leaders to provide the oversight necessary to assure that MnDOT follows existing statutes and that MnDOT bureaucrats are not allowed to undermine these important safeguards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Siekmeier
Retired MnDOT Engineer