

March 25, 2021

House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee  
Chair, Representative Frank Hornstein  
545 State Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: H.F. 1894

Dear Chair Hornstein and Committee Members,

The Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS) representing over 78,000 residents of Northeastern Minnesota, stand in support of HF 1894 authored by Representative Julie Sandstede. This bill should be unnecessary, but unfortunately the Minnesota Department of Transportation needs to be required to include the completion of U.S. highway 169 as part of their ten-year capital highway investment plan to complete this project that was started in the mid 1960's!

As an advocate organization for Iron Range communities and schools we annually include in our legislative list of priorities the completion of U.S. highway 169, a project that should have been completed in the '70's or '80's at the latest. The remaining stretch of two-lane highway extends from Pengilly to Taconite and is approximately 8 miles long. The completion of the major traffic corridor across the Iron Range is imperative and as important as the many investments that occur annually in the metro areas of Minnesota.

Commerce on the Iron Range happens just like elsewhere, with trucks delivering products and hauling products from our region of the state to other locations. People commute daily to and from work, Grand Rapids is the county seat for Itasca County, has the largest school district on the Iron Range, along with a community college, a large regional health care campus and the Blandin/Sappi paper mill. Iron Rangers deserve safe transportation routes just like other regions of the state and H.F. 1894 when passed will give us hope that this four-lane interstate highway may be completed one day.

I thank you for your time and ask for your support of H.F. 1894.

Sincerely,

Steve Giorgi/Executive Director  
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Cc: Representative Julie Sandstede