

Rep. Frank Hornstein
Chair, House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
545 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 31, 2022

Dear Chair Hornstein and members of the House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of HF 4708, the Local Transit Improvement Act. Of the measures included within the bill, a critically important provision is the creation of a working group to examine how to best deploy service improvements to local bus service—namely, consideration of dedicated bus lanes, traffic signal prioritization, and other related tools on some of the routes with the highest ridership on the Metro Transit system.

These ideas are not new. Since the spring of 2021, Move Minnesota has spearheaded a campaign called Boost the Bus. We urged local and regional leaders to implement these simple, low cost changes to improve the speed and reliability of Metro Transit local bus service:

- **Transit Signal Priority:** Red and green light cycles are adjusted to move buses faster by either shortening a red light when a bus is at an intersection or holding a green light longer.
- **Bus Lanes:** Dedicated lanes ensure buses doesn't waste time stuck in car traffic. Often painted onto the street, these simple markings provide designated space for your bus to move efficiently along its route.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback, but were cautioned that in order to make our efforts successful we needed to be sure both technical staff and decisionmakers were brought together to figure out how to logistically make such improvements work. We were also cautioned that multiple jurisdictions would need to be involved in each decision, because different jurisdictions control the stop lights, pavement, and buses. HF 4708 will ensure that this collaboration happens, and will bring forth recommendations that can be considered at the state, regional, county and city level for future legislation or policy changes.

Once the logistics of these improvements can be ironed out, the benefits for transit riders will be significant. Conservatively, universal signal priority and strategic dedicated bus lanes on the High Frequency Transit Network can produce a 20% increase in transit trip speeds, which would transform the ridership experience with:

- An estimated time savings of more than 40 hours per year per person.
- Across the system in total, that's 780,850 hours saved across total ridership per year—valuing a rider's time at \$15 per hour, that's more than \$11 million in annual savings.
- More frequent buses and shorter transfers (assuming no reduction in the number of buses per route)

We hope you can support these critical planning activities set forth in HF 4708.

Sincerely,

Sam Rockwell
Executive Director, Move Minnesota

With the support of:



HENNEPIN COUNTY
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Trista MatasCastillo, Chair, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners

