



SIERRA CLUB
NORTH STAR CHAPTER

Sierra Club North Star Chapter
2300 Myrtle Avenue, Suite 260
Saint Paul, MN 55114

March 2, 2023

The Honorable Senator Scott Dibble
Chair, Transportation Committee
Minnesota Senate

The Honorable Representative Frank Hornstein
Chair, Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives

Dear Chairs Dibble and Hornstein:

We write in support of 2023 House File 409 and 2022 Senate File 202 with sufficient Minnesota state matching money to build out the Northern Lights Express (NLX) passenger rail service between Minneapolis and Duluth and fund its first years of service.

Founded in 1968, the Sierra Club North Star Chapter represents over 50,000 members, partners, allies and supporters across Minnesota. The Sierra Club North Star Chapter works to reestablish and protect the health and sustainability of our communities and protect and preserve the world's wildlife and wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation. As a leading grassroots voice working to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment, we empower volunteer leaders to act through environmental advocacy, community organizing, and outdoor exploration.

Passenger rail is the most energy-efficient intercity major transportation mode yet invented. It connects the cores of towns and cities, supporting walkable communities and lifestyles. Tracks already exist along the proposed NLX route, meaning little or no disruption or displacement in existing communities. Every NLX passenger would be one less person using I-35 between Minneapolis and Duluth, which means less emissions both at the tailpipe and in support activities such as expansion or maintenance of roads and road bridges. NLX already has the support of a strong coalition of business, labor and advocacy stakeholders. Each state dollar can leverage multiple federal dollars for investment in freight as well as passenger movement. Minnesota's current state surplus offers the chance to make this investment without raising taxes. But most all, NLX offers affordable mobility along one of Minnesota's most popular corridors to all those who cannot or prefer not to drive.

For all these reasons, we support full funding of NLX this legislative session.

Sincerely,

Margaret Levin
State Director
Sierra Club North Star Chapter