



April 9, 2021

Rep. Paul Marquart
Chair
House Committee on Taxes

Dear Chair Marquart and Members of the House Committee on Taxes:

On behalf of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the more than 6300 employers and 500,000 employees we represent, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HF 1684, the Transportation omnibus policy and finance bill.

Our members want to make sure sufficient investments are being made in the state's transportation infrastructure to ensure a safe, reliable, multimodal transportation system that allows employers to get their goods to market and their employees and customers to their door. We do appreciate the efforts made in the bill to bring new resources into the system. For several years, we have supported the idea of adjusting the depreciation scheduled that is used to calculate vehicle registration fees in Minnesota to reflect the increase in the average age of vehicles on the road.

It is certainly possible to see a scenario in which we could support specific funding increases. However, on balance, when considering the other mandates and burdens on employers proposed by the House this session, not the least of which is a tax bill proposing hundreds of millions in permanent tax increases and a number of new, burdensome and costly labor mandates, we cannot support even more cost increases. Minnesota businesses do not have the luxury of considering transportation investments and tax and labor policies separately, in a vacuum. These types of proposals will make it much harder for Minnesota to recover from the pandemic and fully reengage the economic engine of our state – our vibrant private sector.

We are committed to working with Chair Hornstein to find a way forward on needed, increased investment in our transportation infrastructure. But this work must balance the challenging economic environment that Minnesota employers and consumers are navigating during this unusual time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bentley Graves", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bentley Graves
Director, Health Care & Transportation Policy