



May 12, 2021

Members of the Transportation Conference Committee

Re: **Support for HF 1684 – Transportation Omnibus Bill**

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of our coalition of more than 70 environmental and conservation organizations and the Minnesota residents we represent, thank you for your work on this conference committee.

A successful transportation system doesn't only help all people move around, it helps people live better lives. From the air we breathe, to the shops and appointments we can independently access, to the time we spend getting to our jobs and errands, transportation options help Minnesotans live more fully.

We thank you for the many ways HF 1684 has the potential to take us forward, supporting multi-modal ways to move around that both improve life for people and put us on a path to significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These investments also allow Minnesota to be prepared to take advantage of federal funding that may require a state match.

We would like to highlight our support for the following provisions:

General Fund Allocations for Greater MN Transit, Bike and Pedestrian Routes

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 3, Section 7
(page R52 of the side-by-side)

This dedicated 5 percent of the sales taxes on motor vehicle repair and replacement parts would strengthen transit and better serve communities in greater Minnesota.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

½ Cent Metro Sales Tax for Bus Rapid Transit, Local Buses, Metro Mobility

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 3, Section 9
(page R55 of the side-by-side)

Increased funding for terrific transit is what we need to help communities thrive, give families options, and make schools and jobs accessible: for people, for students, for employees, for seniors, for youth, for everyone. Whether we use it ourselves or not, strong transit benefits us all. This half cent sales tax within the transit taxing district (which is approximately the seven-county metro area), combined with federal funds would be a major step in providing the resources to make transit a desirable option that serves our communities.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

Goal to Reduce Vehicles Miles Traveled 20% by 2050

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 6, Section 57

(page R137 of the side-by-side)

This section asks the commissioner to establish separate goals for rural and metropolitan areas to account for different transportation options and patterns. Setting goals matters because it informs policy and investments. Services that reduce individual vehicle miles traveled helps us meet our climate goals; for many people it will also help improve their quality of life.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

Passenger Rail

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Section 2

(page R4 of the side-by-side)

The \$3 million investment includes final design and construction for second daily Amtrack train service from Minneapolis and St. Paul to Chicago.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Development Program

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 6, Section 64

(page R144 from the side-by-side)

This program would give state agencies, political subdivisions, and tribal governments opportunities to apply for grants that fund up to 80% of an electric vehicle infrastructure project. We are pleased that criteria and prioritization of projects must take into consideration geographic balance as well as benefits to communities that have been historically underrepresented in transportation planning or disproportionately impacted by pollution from the transportation sector. Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and electric vehicles are an important piece of the puzzle to decarbonizing transportation.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

Deployment of lowest-emission buses to communities with poor air quality

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 6, Section 87

(page R159 from the side-by-side)

Those communities that are closest to air pollution suffer significant health consequences associated with breathing those emissions. Our investments should prioritize addressing the pollution causing these inequitable health impacts.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

Zero-Emission Vehicle Transition Plan

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 6, Section 88

(page R160 from the side-by-side)

This section directs the Met Council to develop and maintain a plan that contains a goal of deploying zero-emission vehicles in 100 percent of the council's transit fleet by 2040.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

Reconnect Rondo Project Development

House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Section 2
(page R6 from the side-by-side)

In the 1960’s, city and state leaders built the I-94 highway through the thriving black Rondo community. Homes, business, churches, whole neighborhoods were torn apart. Those that remained were now next to a freeway, subjecting those living nearby to air pollutants. Repair of this harm is possible. This \$6.2 million general fund allocation to Reconnect Rondo for project development of the Rondo Land Bridge freeway lid could be used for area planning and design, project assessment and analysis, and more.

We ask you to include this language from the House.

Safe Routes to Schools and Active Transportation

Senate: Unofficial Engrossment, Article 1, Section 2
House: 3rd Engrossment, Article 1, Section 2
(page R4 from the side-by-side)

A good transportation bill gives people and families options, like being able to safely walk to school. The Senate provides \$1 million over the biennium from the general fund to expand the Safe Routes to School across Minnesota, the House provides \$3 million. Funding requests to the Safe Routes to Schools program regularly outstrip available funds by 80-90%. The House funding amount would be able to better leverage federal funds statewide and improve physical and mental health for students and communities across Minnesota.

We ask you to include the higher amount included in the House language.

We ask you to build a bill that makes strong investments in the people and communities across our state and moves our transportation systems into the future we need.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Move MN

Cooperative Energy Futures*

Our Streets Minneapolis

Izaak Walton League Minnesota Division

Resilient Cities & Communities

League of Women Voters Minnesota

Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Minnesota Well Owners Organization

Vote Climate

Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

* indicates not an MEP member