

March 7, 2022

Dear Chair Lee:

On behalf of the 28,000 members and family members of Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing in support of the Northern Lights Express (NLX) intercity passenger rail project and bonding request (HF 2681 and HF 2682). We support inclusion of the project in your 2022 capital investment bill.

LIUNA's top priority for the 2022 Legislative Session is to pass a large, bipartisan local jobs and projects bill that makes robust investments in transportation and water infrastructure and housing that creates high-quality building and construction jobs across the state. The NLX project is one of the most shovel-ready projects in the country and will improve Minnesota's transportation system, provide people with safe, reliable and frequent connections to jobs and opportunities, create approximately 3,000 construction jobs and build our local economies.

As you may know, HF 2681 and HF 2682 would leverage an 80 percent match in federal funding up to \$320 million to complete the project. The appropriations would fund capital improvements and betterments, including preliminary engineering, design, engineering, environmental analysis and mitigation, acquisition of land and right-of-way and construction. The NLX project will invest approximately \$76 million in safety improvements at 166 railroad crossings on 152 miles of existing track. The movement of freight will improve immediately, helping our local economies. Once complete, the NLX project is proposed to run four round trips per day between Target Field in Minneapolis and the Depot in Duluth, with stops at Coon Rapids, Cambridge and Hinckley, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin. The project will increase property values, state and local tax revenue, and jobs and economic development at every stop along the way.

Now is the time, with the State's AAA bond rating and low interest rates, to create local, living wage jobs. Again, we recommend the Northern Lights Express (NLX) intercity passenger rail project and bonding request to be included in your 2022 capital investment bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Joel Smith
President and Business Manager
LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota