



May 7, 2021

Governor Tim Walz
Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman
Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka
House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt
Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent

(Sent via electronic delivery)

Dear Governor Walz and Legislative Leaders,

As conference committees commence and you begin final negotiations on the biennial budget, we as business representatives and facilitators of regional economic growth urge you keep the importance of transit in mind as you establish a budget for the next biennium. A strong transit system—that builds on existing plans—is a critical and cost-effective way to bolster our near-term economic recovery and long-term regional competitiveness.

Investments in transit are a true win-win that provide access to jobs and opportunities in the region. This access is particularly critical now: customer access to businesses and business access to workers are essential components of a strong economy and a robust recovery. Expanded and improved transit will allow workers, customers, and clients to access more large and small businesses in less time. And a stronger transit system will also benefit drivers and the freight industry by reducing congestion on our roadways.

Transit investments are also critical for our long-term economic health. Young people are looking to live in regions where car ownership is not a required; our essential workers—who disproportionately depend on transit—need reliable service; transit vehicles are manufactured right here in Minnesota, creating jobs through the rollout of lines; and our communities will reap direct benefits of more than 3:1 on investments in transit, as calculated in a report by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, the Itasca Project, and East Metro Strong.

We need transit to meet many of our state's goals: to make Minnesota the best state in the country to raise a family and start a business; to meet our obligation to address the inequalities Minnesotans

currently face based on race, income, and ability; and to continue to build healthy and sustainable communities. Providing funds for transit now, combined with the one-time federal funds we've received from recent national relief packages, ensures that we will be well on our way to building out a comprehensive system in the metro area.

We stand with you, ready to applaud your dedication to improving the lives of Minnesotans through new, strong investment in transit.

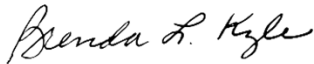
Sincerely,



Lynn Casey
Chair
Itasca Project



Jonathan Weinhagen
President and CEO
Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce



B Kyle
President and CEO
St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce



Peter Frosh
President and CEO
Greater MSP Partnership



Will Schoeer
Executive Director
East Metro Strong



With the support of: Sam Rockwell
Executive Director
Move Minnesota

Cc: Rep. Frank Hornstein, House Transportation Committee Chair
Sen. Scott Newman, Senate Transportation Committee Chair
Chris Schmitter, Chief of Staff to Governor Walz
Hue Nguyen, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Legislative Affairs to Governor Walz
Alexis Donath, Policy Advisor
Charles Sutton, Senior Policy Advisor
Sean Rahn, Executive Director, House DFL Caucus
Craig Sondag, Executive Director, Senate GOP Caucus
Susan Closmore, Executive Director, House GOP Caucus
John Pollard, Chief of Staff, Senate DFL Caucus

