

Sample Letter

DATE

REPRESENTATIVE _____/SENATOR _____

ROOM NUMBER

STATE OFFICE BLDG/SENATE OFFICE BLDG

100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd/95 University Ave W.

St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Rep./Senator _____:

I am writing to urge you to work with your colleagues and the governor to pass a major capital bonding bill during a special session in September.

Minnesota's economy needs additional jobs now which can be created right away with significant funding for critical transportation programs and projects including the Local Road Improvement Program, the Local Bridge Repair and Replacement program, Bus Rapid Transit and bus facilities, the Local Road Wetland Replacement program, port improvement projects and rail investments.

Publicly owned transportation infrastructure is an asset worth billions of dollars that needs to be maintained and improved. Most of the funding is used for asset preservation - repair or replacement of existing transportation infrastructure - through projects that will get people to work right away.

The Local Road Improvement Program assists all local governments - counties, cities and townships in maintaining and improving the roads under their jurisdiction. Local governments are using all of the tools at their disposal, including property taxes, wheelage taxes, local option sales taxes, and special assessments but continue to fall behind in maintaining safe, quality roadways. With assistance from state general obligation bonds, which leverage additional federal and local funds, many more projects can be completed, allowing local governments to address a backlog of road needs.

MnDOT has identified a need for \$100 million in GO bonds to assist local governments who have federal and local funds available and are waiting to complete critical local road projects.

The Local Bridge Replacement program has been funded in every capital bonding bill for decades. Preserving the structural integrity of Minnesota's bridges is a priority for counties, cities, and townships. Bridges are a critical link in the state's transportation system and benefit the state's economy by providing connections for people and markets throughout the state. State financial assistance to local units of government is necessary because of the significant number of bridges and the associated cost for replacement of this important highway asset. The replacement of major bridges is too much for local transportation budgets to bear with local funds alone.

There are 14,814 bridge structures (10 feet or greater) on the local system and approximately 1,000 of these structures are identified as deficient or obsolete. The governor has recommended \$112 million in GO bonds be included in the 2020 Capital Bonding bill to address the waiting list of bridges ready for construction and meet the need for bridges programmed for 2020 and 2021.

Bus rapid transit is a proven solution to significant challenges on local bus corridors. The funds would advance the development of three additional projects in the next two years and would aid the build-out of the BRT network. This network would link nearly 500,000 jobs and residents via transit and expand the reach of the METRO network of dedicated guideway LRT and BRT projects. Suburban transit systems also need some capital facility upgrades to continue to improve and expand service in suburban areas.

In Greater Minnesota, transit systems need bus garages to maintain their fleets out of the elements and modernize existing facilities. From urban systems in St. Cloud, Duluth and Rochester to rural systems throughout the state, capital projects are difficult to finance without state assistance.

Funding for the Local Road Wetland Replacement program (both bonds and cash) is desperately needed to keep local projects on schedule and on budget while protecting important wetlands. Some wetland banks are out of credits or will be depleted soon.

After months of hearings and negotiations, agreement has been reached on the size of the bill and the need to invest in Minnesota's public infrastructure. It's time for agreement on a bill that can pass in September. Projects are waiting for funding and work can begin right away on design and construction with significant benefits for the whole economy.

Maintaining publicly-owned assets remains a core government function. This legislation is a necessity – not a nicety. Passage of this bill should not be used as a bargaining chip that is tied to other issues. **Providing bond funds at a time of historically low interest rates in order to repair and maintain public infrastructure that will last for generations should be the main job for the legislature this year. It's time to get the job done.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

NAME
ADDRESS

Transportation Requests for GO Bonds

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Local Bridge Program | \$112,000,000 |
| Local Road Improvement Program | \$100,000,000 |
| Transitways - Metro | \$ 75,000,000 |
| Transit Capital – Greater Minnesota | \$ 10,000,000 |
| Local Road Wetland Mitigation | \$ 26,400,000 |
| Ports and Waterways | \$ 14,000,000 |
| Railroad grade crossings | \$ 10,000,000 |
| MnDOT Rail | \$ 30,000,000 |