



May 10, 2024

Senator Scott Dibble  
Senator Jennifer McEwen  
Senator Lindsey Port  
Senator Kelly Morrison  
Senator Warren Limmer

Rep. Frank Hornstein  
Rep. Brad Tabke  
Rep. Michael Nelson  
Rep. Michael Howard  
Rep. John Petersburg

RE: HF5242 Transportation, Labor and Housing Supplemental Budget bill

Chairs Dibble and Hornstein and Conferees:

On behalf of the member organizations of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance, including local governments, the transportation industry, labor, transit systems and businesses, I am writing to provide our comments on some of the provisions in HF5242, the omnibus transportation, labor and housing supplemental budget bill.

### **Trunk Highway Fund Appropriations**

Members of the Transportation Alliance appreciate your work to provide needed resources from the trunk highway fund for state bridges, additional funding for the state road construction program contained in the Senate bill and funding for the Corridors of Commerce program, also contained in the Senate bill. The ongoing funding for Corridors of Commerce is important for project planning.

In addition, we support the goal of ensuring that trunk highway expenditures meet the Constitutional requirement of being used for a highway purpose. We appreciate the language in the Senate bill (R23) that adds an analysis of the percentage of activities or purchases from trunk highway funds that are not for trunk highway purposes in the report on dedicated fund expenditures.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment Modifications**

The Transportation Alliance supports the language passed by both the House and Senate to make changes to the law passed last year requiring a greenhouse gas emissions assessment for capacity expansion projects on the trunk highway system. The working group that met during the interim developed some important recommendations for improvements in the law and we appreciate the inclusion of many of those recommendations in the bill.

We support the Senate provisions (R28) that allows an exemption from the assessment for projects that the commissioner determines will result in a reduction in fatal and serious injuries at locations with documented safety issues. We believe that the immediate need to reduce injuries and fatalities should be a top priority and these projects should move as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**Since 1893**

525 Park St., Ste. 240 ● Saint Paul, MN 55103 ● 651/659-0804 ● Fax 651/659-9009  
Email: [margaret@transportationalliance.com](mailto:margaret@transportationalliance.com) ● [www.transportationalliance.com](http://www.transportationalliance.com)

We also support the Senate language (R28) creating the transportation impact assessment and mitigation account in the special revenue fund as opposed to using trunk highway dollars for mitigation investments that may not involve work on the trunk highway system.

The Alliance also supports the language in the Senate bill (R29) that specifies the inclusion of a county and city engineer on the Transportation Impact Assessment Technical Committee. We strongly believe that the expertise of county and city engineers will contribute greatly to the technical work of this committee.

### **Local Government Funding**

Transportation Alliance members greatly appreciate the recognition in the bill that local governments need additional funding options and dollars to make up for expected increases for road work that did not occur. We support the provision of additional funding to the Small Cities Assistance Account in light of the delay in funding passed last session.

We also support the inclusion of language in the Senate bill that allows townships, small cities, large cities and counties to use dedicated funds to pay debt service on local bonds. This new authority will allow local governments to maximize the use of transportation dollars.

We do have some concerns about new reporting requirements in the Senate bill (R128) on the uses of revenue from the regional sales tax collected in the metro area.

To maximize limited local road dollars, we support the provisions in both bills that require the Metropolitan Council to fully scope all bus rapid transit projects and would recommend the House language on R125 that specifies the elements that need to be included as part of bus rapid transit projects.

### **Safety**

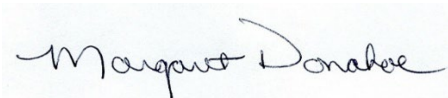
The Transportation Alliance has long supported the use of speed cameras to help reduce speeding and crashes on our roadways. The Alliance strongly supports the goal of installing speed traffic cameras in highway work zones to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities that occur every year in construction work zones. The language in the Senate bill (R64-65) provides for a pilot project to test the use of speed cameras in two work zones. We are disappointed that the language does include a fine for speeding in work zones as every other state that has seen success with this technology has implemented a fine for drivers who violate the work zone speed limit and our goal is to change driving behavior.

### **Workforce**

The need for drivers with a commercial driver's license has been a problem for a number of years, one that impacts both the highway system and transit agencies. We strongly support the inclusion of the Commercial Driver Workforce Study (R138) in the Senate bill to develop policies that will assist in the recruitment and retention of vehicle operators who are critical to the success of transit operations and highway work.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. We greatly appreciate all of the work that went into this year's omnibus finance bill.

Sincerely,



Margaret Donahoe  
Executive Director