



395 John Ireland Boulevard  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 9, 2025

The Honorable Jon Koznick  
Chair  
House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Koznick,

This letter shares some concerns about House File 1167, an effort to prohibit any further development and advancement of the Northern Lights Express passenger rail service.

With the authorization in 2023 of \$194.7 million in state funds, the Minnesota Department of Transportation expediently began to work on securing federal funds to complement the state matching funds for development, construction and operations of the Northern Lights Express passenger rail service from the Twin Cities to Duluth.

In December 2023, the Federal Railroad Administration announced the NLX project was being included in the newly created Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program. This program serves as the pipeline for new and expanded passenger rail service across the country.

The FRA's Corridor ID Program consists of three steps and MnDOT is adhering to that process. MnDOT is pleased to share that \$500,000 was obligated for Step 1 and all deliverables have been completed, including a proposed scope, schedule and budget for the Service Development Plan required under Step 2. This will be followed by Step 3 which is environmental review, final design and construction.

MnDOT staff continue to work with the FRA and BNSF Railway Company on the project, and we recently secured a letter from BNSF committing to continue working with us on corridor development.

Additionally, MnDOT has applied for FRA's Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program. This would provide the 80 percent federal funds portion needed to advance NLX to construction. We are hopeful the FRA will announce award decisions this spring.

Continued legislative support for this project is critical to its success.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these perspectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Daubenberger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "N".

Nancy Daubenberger, P.E. (MN)

Commissioner

CC: The Honorable Patti Anderson, House File 1167 Chief Author

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