



April 5, 2022

Senator Julie Rosen, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2113
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Rosen:

I would like to share with you my concerns about SF 1154, the supplemental transportation finance bill that you are hearing in your committee tomorrow morning. Though the bill contains a number of provisions that would impact the Metropolitan Council, I will focus on a few that are of particular concern.

SF 1154 provides state funding to the Council to match IIJA funds but regrettably does not allow these appropriations to be used as match for electric vehicle grant programs. Doing this takes away one of our primary opportunities to pursue federal funds and realize the environmental benefits electric buses will have for the region.

I am also concerned that some of the IIJA matching funds are provided from our FY23 general fund appropriation that we just negotiated last session. As proposed, this approach will result in a permanent reduction to our base going forward and I strongly oppose any deviation from that agreement.

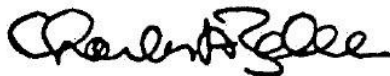
SF 1154 also includes a number of policy provisions that relate to guideways that are troublesome. I am strongly opposed to any effort to suspend the construction of a line or add a municipal consent provision that would allow a municipality to revoke their previous consent for a project that has already completed the local planning phase. I am also concerned that changing the funding approach to regional guideways would make it difficult to implement the regional transitway vision.

Regarding Northstar, I believe the provision to ask the FTA to discontinue service is premature. We will be looking at the potential termination of the service as one of the options included in the study we are conducting with MnDOT and the counties that have contributed to its construction and operations. I would also add there are other entities that would be impacted in the potential termination of the line that need to be considered beyond the FTA. Our study will include them as well.

I am open to discussions regarding processes for reporting ridership and crime statistics. However, I encourage the Senate to consider our administrative citations initiative that passed by the Senate Transportation Committee last session, as I believe it will improve our service and customer experience.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of these comments and I look forward to working with you over the next few weeks to find agreement on a bill. Please reach out to me or Judd Schetnan with any questions or comments. We are available to meet at your convenience.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Zelle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" and last name "Zelle" clearly distinguishable.

Charles Zelle
Chair, Metropolitan Council