

S.F. No. 3123 – Corridors of Commerce Modifications

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S.F. 3123 makes several modifications to the Corridors of Commerce program administered by MnDOT.

Section 1 [§161.088; Definitions] provides definition of “greater Minnesota area,” “metro area,” and “regional balance.”

Section 2 [§161.088; Project eligibility] classifies projects in greater Minnesota as either large or small projects, depending on whether they are over or under \$10,000,000. All projects in the metro area are classified the same, regardless of cost.

Section 3 [§161.088; Project selection process; criteria] adds another step in the project selection process. Before projects are evaluated on the statutorily defined criteria, all project recommendations must be screened as provided by this section. Projects must first be grouped geographically according to which area transportation partnership (ATP) includes most of the project. For projects in greater Minnesota, the applicable ATP must review the recommendations from its area and select up to three projects to advance to the evaluation process. The Metropolitan Council’s Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) must review all projects in the seven-county metropolitan area. The TAB must select up to ten projects to advance to the evaluation process. All projects in Chisago County must be reviewed by the Chisago County Board. The board must select up to one project to advance to the evaluation process. The department may only evaluate the projects that are advanced by the specified entities; all other projects are disqualified from further consideration.

Under current law, the commissioner must consider regional balance with evaluating projects. This bill provides additional guidance on what the existing criteria of “regional balance” means. Approximately half of the funds must be used for projects in the metro and the other half must be used for projects in greater Minnesota. Of the funds for greater Minnesota projects, 25% must be used for small projects.

Background on ATPs. An ATP is a group that is responsible for developing a regional transportation improvement program for their area of the state. ATPs include various stakeholders, including MnDOT, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Development Commissions (RDCs), local governments, tribal governments, special interest groups, and members of the public. There are eight ATPs in Minnesota. You can read more about ATPs on MnDOT's website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/program/mpordcatp.html>.