



April 3, 2022

Senator Scott Newman, Chair
Senate Transportation Finance & Policy Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3105
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Newman:

I would like to share with you my concerns about SF 1154, the supplemental transportation finance bill. 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.

While I appreciate the state funding provided to the Council to match IIJA funds, not allowing these appropriations to be used as our match for electric vehicle grant programs takes away one of our primary opportunities to pursue federal funds and realize the environmental benefits electric buses will have for the region. Further, I am also concerned that providing the IIJA matching funds from our FY23 general fund appropriation could potentially result in a reduction to our base going forward and I would strongly oppose any effort to change the agreement we negotiated just last session.

SF 1154 also includes a number of 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.

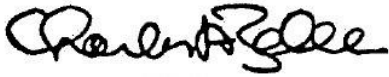
Regarding Northstar, I believe the provision to ask the FTA to discontinue service is premature. We will be looking at the potential termination of the service as one of the options included in the study we are conducting with MnDOT and the counties that have contributed to its construction and operations. 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 you to include our administrative citations initiative in the bill that you passed in your committee last session, as I believe it will improve our service and customer experience.

Lastly, our partners at MnDOT will address our concerns with the Corridors of Commerce selection process.

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" being more prominent than the last name "Zelle".

Charles Zelle
Chair, Metropolitan Council