



www.mncounties.org

www.minnesotacountyengineers.org

May 15, 2023

Chair Marty and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and the Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA), we write to share our concerns about the amount of general fund revenue included in HF670 for the Local Bridge Replacement Program (LBRP), the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP), and the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program (LRWRP).

AMC and MCEA have long advocated for the urgent statewide need for increased transportation dollars. One of our top priorities this year and for the past several years is support for a comprehensive transportation funding bill that includes new, dedicated revenue for roads, bridges, and transit as well as a bonding bill that includes investment in transportation-related programs.

While we appreciate the inclusion of funding for the local road and bridge programs, the current cash proposal of \$22 million to each program is not enough to cover the significant statewide need. Over the next five years, cities and counties have identified 634 priority bridge replacement projects by city council or county board resolution, requesting approximately \$290 million in state bridge funds. These projects are expected to leverage an additional \$400 million in federal, state aid, local, and other funds. The most recent solicitation for LRIP received over 400 applications totaling \$344 million in requests, far exceeding the \$75 million available in the 2020 bonding bill. Earlier this session, we offered our support for SF1021, Sen. Dibble's bill that would provide \$200 million in bonds for the LBRP and \$150 million in bonds for the LRIP. We encourage the Legislature to create a final package that is closer to those numbers.

When it comes to wetland replacement for existing local road projects, currently three out of the ten bank service areas are at zero credits. While the LRWRP is in need of a cash investment this year, \$3 million without any general obligation bonds will not be enough to continue building on the progress that the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has made in recent years towards more sustainable credit balances.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We hope a final capital investment bill will include additional investments in these three programs to meet more of the state's transportation infrastructure needs.

Sincerely,

Emily Murray, Policy Analyst
Association of Minnesota Counties

Brian Pogodzinski, Houston County Engineer
President, Minnesota County Engineers Association