

January 30, 2023

Chair Dibble, Ranking Minority Member Jasinsky and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the 28,000 members and family members of Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing in support of the Northern Lights Express (NLX) intercity passenger rail project and general fund request (SF 202 and HF 409).

As you may know, the NLX project is one of the most shovel-ready projects in the country and will improve Minnesota's transportation system, provide people with safe, reliable and frequent connections to jobs and opportunities, create approximately 3,000 construction jobs and build our local economies.

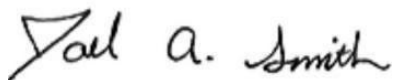
SF 202 and HF 409 would leverage an 80 percent match in federal funding up to \$320 million to complete the project, contingent upon securing state funding. The appropriation would fund capital improvements and betterments, including preliminary engineering, design, engineering, environmental analysis and mitigation, acquisition of land and right-of-way and construction.

The NLX project will invest approximately \$76 million in safety improvements at 166 railroad crossings on 152 miles of existing track. The movement of freight will improve immediately, helping our local economies. Once complete, the NLX project is proposed to run four round trips per day between Target Field in Minneapolis and the Depot in Duluth, with stops at Coon Rapids, Cambridge and Hinckley, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin. The project will increase property values, state and local tax revenue, and jobs and economic development at every stop along the way.

Now is the time to connect communities, expand access to jobs and housing, address climate change, and improve daily life for Minnesotans of all ages, races, incomes, and abilities. We need to build a transportation system that addresses the state's growing mobility and safety needs. Again, we recommend the Northern Lights Express (NLX) intercity passenger rail project and general fund request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Joel Smith
President and Business Manager
LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota