

March 13, 2023

We are a coalition of labor organizations and we encourage state lawmakers to invest \$200 million in the Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit project.

The Blue Line Extension LRT project will employ thousands of construction workers from all corners of the state and spur significant economic development. Whether it's laborers, carpenters, electricians, cement masons, iron workers, or operating engineers—this project represents thousands of working Minnesotans and millions of work hours, which support middle class families across the region.

No other transportation infrastructure generates the magnitude of economic development that benefits the entire state than fixed guideway transit like light rail. More than \$9.2 billion in development has been built near existing and planned light rail stations in the region, with more in the pipeline. This project will ignite economic investment for small businesses, improve affordable housing options, increase access to educational opportunities, and build wealth for working families.

From good paying construction jobs to build the project to long-term quality of life improvements, the Blue Line Extension LRT project will bring transformational improvements to the lives of residents from Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park. The communities served by this line are transit-reliant, racially diverse, and have experienced historical disinvestment. The Blue Line Extension is an opportunity to connect this corridor to the broader transit network while providing sustainable transportation options.

Transit is an investment in the health of our environment. Cars and trucks are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota. High-quality transit options reduce pollution and congestion. Investments in transit are also imperative towards meeting the needs of communities disproportionately impacted by climate change. The Blue Line Extension is a key step towards addressing environmental injustices that have been inflicted on these communities.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is a once-in-a-generation federal investment in our nation's infrastructure, and we must act now to maximize the federal funding coming to Minnesota. The state's \$200 million investment will help leverage nearly a billion in federal matching funds.

The state's budget surplus presents a historic opportunity to make transformational investments in the state's transportation infrastructure. Minnesota's future relies on a complete transportation system that includes both roads and transit. We urge our leaders in the Legislature to prioritize both with a cash investment in our transportation infrastructure and sustainable funding to support the long-term vitality of our state and all Minnesotans.

We strongly encourage you to strategically invest \$200 million in the Blue Line Extension LRT.

