

Members of the Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. I am writing this to express my support for SF 4719, appropriating anti-displacement funds for use by the Metro Blue Line Extension.

I am a daily light rail rider; I ride the Blue Line to work every day, use it to get to appointments, meet up with friends, and volunteer. The Blue Line is so important to me and many others that ride it every day. I see this light rail extension as vital: the backbone of a transportation system that is reliable in any weather. This extension is also a great connection to many jobs, communities, and points of interest such as the airport and Mall of America. As someone who rides transit daily, having a one seat ride to places like those is so important! However, there are valid concerns by those along the line that the construction and operation of the line through their neighborhoods would affect them negatively - be it businesses struggling during construction, gentrification, or buildings needing to be torn down, for example. I believe this light rail extension has tremendous long term benefits for the communities it goes through, as it has for mine, but we need to be honest in acknowledging that large infrastructure projects like this can have unintended consequences if they are not dealt with adequately. The Blue Line Extension team did a great job with a list of ways to mitigate displacement along the corridor, and this bill puts money towards those words. Recommendations are just words on paper until money is allocated to them, and that is exactly what this bill does.

In conclusion, this bill is a critical piece of getting this project done as smoothly as possible, and I urge the members of this committee to move it forward.

Thank you,
Owen Young