



May 7, 2025

Re: Support for 2025 Senate Capital Budget Proposal

Members of the Senate Capital Investment Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA), thank you for the opportunity to present comments in support of the Senate Capital Budget Proposal. MICA is a voluntary association of 17 high-growth counties, including the five metropolitan collar counties, and collectively represents over 44% of the state's population. MICA has long advocated for transportation revenues that support a safe and efficient transportation network. The bonding bill has long been an important source of funding to maintain the state's local roads and bridges, and we are grateful to see that support continue in 2025. Specifically, we applaud the inclusion of:

\$3.6 million to the Board of Water & Soil Resources for the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program

The Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program (LGRWRP) is a wetland and upland habitat restoration program that generates mitigation credits for local road authorities to satisfy their federal and state wetland regulatory permit requirements. Minnesota law requires BWSR to replace wetlands that are drained or filled by public transportation projects on existing roads. The bank of credits used to administer this program is almost exhausted, so this infusion of funding will ensure road projects won't be disrupted and that high quality replacement wetlands continue to be constructed.

\$14 million for the Local Bridge Replacement Program

Local government jurisdictions oversee 15,620 bridges. Hundreds of them have met or exceeded their average lifespan of 50 year or are in poor condition and need critical repairs. The state's comprehensive bridge replacement priority list includes 948 bridges with an estimated total replacement cost of over \$847 million. The \$14 million appropriation will immediately be put to good use.

\$23 million for the Local Road Improvement Program

Like the Local Bridge Replacement Program, funds in the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP), which provide essential funding to local projects based on objective, competitive criteria, are in great demand. After passage of the 2023 bonding bill, a combined total appropriation of almost \$103 million was available for the competitive LRIP solicitation. However, MnDOT's Office of State Aid received 378 application submittals, with requests of \$417.1 million in LRIP funding. Continuing to invest in this program is critical to catching up on the backlog of projects.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and for your work in proposing a robust funding package for the state's critical infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Amber Backhaus
Transportation Liaison
MICA