Worsening Air Pollution and Human Health if 6-Lane Freeway Replaces Highway 252

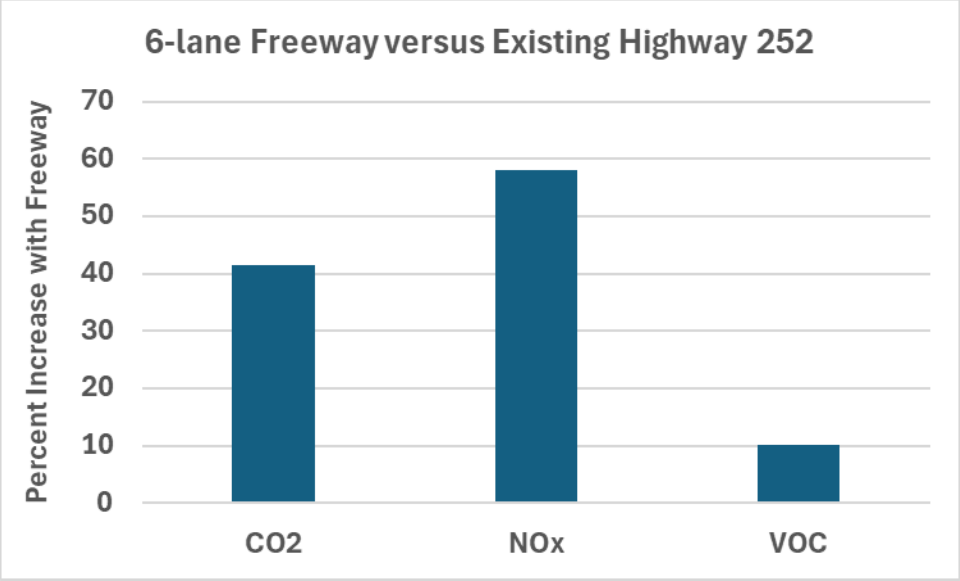
I support SF 817 to require that MnDOT highway project developments include a cumulative impacts analysis and alternative community preferred design to minimize adverse cumulative impacts of air pollution on human health in environmental justice neighborhoods.

I am opposed to MnDOT's plan to convert Highway 252 through Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park to a six-lane Freeway. This is because converting Highway 252 into a 6-lane freeway would increase emissions of carbon dioxide by 42%, nitrous oxide by 58% and volatile organic compounds by 10% relative to the existing air pollution on Highway 252 (see Figure below).

MnDOT has so far refused to consider the cumulative impacts of this freeway conversion on human health in environmental justice areas of Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park.

The likely increases in carbon dioxide are diametrically opposed to the Hennepin County's goal for a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The 58% increase in nitrous oxide and the 10% increase in VOCs associated with a doubling of car traffic and a five-fold increase in diesel truck traffic on the 6-lane freeway are very troubling, because both pollutants are major contributors to lung and heart disease in humans. According to data from MPCA/MDH (Life and Breath Report, 2022), these increases in air pollution caused by increased traffic on a 6-lane freeway will lead to at least a 30% increase in the number of people living along Highway 252 who currently die each year from asthma and COPD.

Traffic estimates are based on MnDOT's own data for the numbers of cars (52,000/day) and heavy diesel fuel trucks (200/day) carried by Highway 252 at present versus their projections for car (114,000/day) and diesel truck (1,000/day) traffic on a 6-lane freeway. A six-lane freeway roughly doubles daily car traffic and increases diesel truck traffic five-fold.



Written testimony provided by David Mulla, 30-year resident of Brooklyn Center, MN