

April 2, 2025



Members of the Minnesota Senate Transportation
Finance and Policy Committee,

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I write to you in support of SF 817, which would make decision-making around highway construction and maintenance more (1) reflective of the variety of ways people travel, (2) inclusive of community input, and (3) considerate of both past and future environmental effects of transportation pollution. Minnesotans deserve a transportation system that protects our health, climate, and our future. The system we have today invests in car infrastructure at the expense of our collective wellbeing. SF 817 is an important pathway to changing that.

SF 817 would provide flexibility to spend revenue we contribute to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund for multiple modes of travel by defining “highway purposes” to encompass driving, taking public transit, biking, walking, and rolling. SF 817 would also allow impacted communities to have greater democratic representation in major highway construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or resurfacing projects through a policy advisory committee that approve design alternatives by a two-thirds vote. Lastly, SF 817 would also strengthen environmental protections before major highway projects are approved by factoring in past and present impacts of pollution from transportation sources on communities along highways.

By defining “highway purpose” to include all ways of getting around, we are meeting people’s needs however they choose to travel. By creating a policy advisory committee, we are centering community input and representation. By prioritizing the health and safety impacts on communities along highways, we are building up more resilient communities. Historically, Black, Indigenous, and immigrant communities have been most impacted by the negative outcomes of highways. Furthermore, we know from a [2023 statewide study](#) that 66% of Minnesotans support moving money away from highway expansion to other modes. Altogether, this is a significant step forward in making our transportation system more equitable.

Thank you for taking steps in correcting past harms and mitigating future harms that highway building projects have brought on communities across the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MJ Carpio".

MJ Carpio
Executive Director
Move Minnesota Action