Senate Capital Investment Committee Testimony in support of SF 373

Madam chair and members of the committee:

My name is Dave Auchter, the former mayor of Finlayson. The Munger Bike Trail from Duluth to Hinckley passes through my city.

Willard Munger envisioned connecting communities, families and friends with the natural beauty of Minnesota, but today I want to speak about public safety.

The 40-year-old trail is crumbling and the section between Finlayson and Hinckley is rated among the worst in the state. It is so bad that people are choosing to bike on roadways and accidents with vehicles are on the rise.

Our school superintendent was struck by a distracted driver and nearly lost her life. Two bikers were killed by vehicles, including a woman from my church I helped lay to rest last fall.

These are not statistics-they are our neighbors.

This bill is so important because investing in this trail, and trails like it, will provide safe corridors to prevent future tragedies.

No one should have to risk their life to take a bike ride.

Thank you,
Dave Auchter
April 16, 2026