



May 3, 2016

Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

Thank you for your efforts over the past two years to pass a new, long-term funding package for Minnesota's transportation infrastructure.

As representatives of Minnesota's local chambers of commerce across the state, we work every day to help ensure our member businesses are able to thrive in our communities. We also know their success doesn't depend solely on our work at the local level. Our members – no matter how big or small – are increasingly reliant upon access to goods, services, employees, and customers from other parts of the state, country, and world. Accordingly, we need a safe, reliable, efficient transportation system that works for the entire state.

We all have local projects we hope to see accomplished with new investment into the transportation system. But we understand that each of those projects – whether a road, bridge, or transit route or line – is part of a much larger, interconnected, and interdependent transportation system in the state that serves all of our communities, increases mobility, and helps ensure the success of all of our members.

We strongly support sustained, increased investment in our roads, bridges, and transit systems. The state's historic budget reserve and surplus give us the opportunity to invest in our infrastructure and reach compromise on how to bring new resources into the transportation system. In addition, we support investment in transit services in Greater Minnesota and efforts to build consensus for an additional metro funding source for metro area transit – recognizing that any new transit investment in the metro must allow for flexible use and be tied to documented efficiencies and reform in the delivery of services. Transit services, whether in the Twin Cities metro area or Greater Minnesota, are vital links in our state's transportation system and ensure mobility of workers and customers. We strongly believe that a comprehensive transportation funding package must include the state's transit needs.

Last month, many of us traveled to St. Paul to participate in the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Day at the Capitol. That event kicked off with a thorough discussion about the current state of play on this issue between Senator Scott Dibble and Representative Tim Kelly, chairs of their respective chambers' transportation committees. We were very pleased with the positive, optimistic tone of their remarks and with the clear commitment to work constructively together to find compromise and pass a comprehensive transportation funding bill this legislative session. After lunch, roughly 300 business leaders from across the state fanned out across the Capitol to meet with individual legislators about transportation funding. Once again, we were pleased with the level of commitment we found among you and your colleagues to taking advantage of the unique opportunity we have this session to pass a transportation funding bill.

We write today to give further encouragement to you in the work that's being done to bring this important work to a successful conclusion before the 2016 session adjourns. Transportation – roads, bridges, and transit – is essential to a healthy, vibrant business climate in Minnesota. Investing in economic and physical infrastructure is essential to making Minnesota ready for the future – ready for change and ready to grow.

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We thank you for your continued commitment to this important issue, and we stand ready to assist you and your colleagues in any way we can to ensure a long-term, comprehensive transportation funding bill is passed and signed into law in the coming weeks.

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce
Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce
Austin Area Chamber of Commerce
Belle Plaine Chamber of Commerce
Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce
Bloomington Chamber of Commerce
Brainerd Lakes Chamber
Burnsville Chamber of Commerce
Cloquet Chamber of Commerce
Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce
Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce
Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Grand Rapids Area Chamber
Greater Mankato Growth Inc.
Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bur
Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce
I94 West Chamber of Commerce
International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
Laurentian Chamber of Commerce
Litchfield Chamber of Commerce

Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce
North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce
Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism
River Heights Chamber of Commerce
Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
Saint Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
Shakopee Area Chamber
SouthWest Metro Chamber of Commerce
Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce
TwinWest Chamber of Commerce
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White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce
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