

Greater Minnesota Worker Center
2719 West Division Street, Suite 103
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Members of the Metropolitan Council:

The Greater Minnesota Worker Center organizes, advocates for, and empowers low wage workers, primarily immigrants and refugees in Central Minnesota. We are writing in support of the U.S. Employment Plan (USEP) procurement policy.

The U.S. Employment Plan requires manufacturers who respond to a transit agency's Request for Proposal (RFP) for passenger railcars or buses to disclose their commitments to create or retain U.S. jobs, invest in new or existing facilities, invest in workforce development and training programs, and hire disadvantaged workers. Residents of Central Minnesota already know how the USEP can have a positive impact in communities across our state and country. When the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority used USEP in a bus procurement, it created 150 new jobs at New Flyer in St. Cloud.

Central Minnesota is the fastest-growing region of the state. We are projected to double our non-white population by 2035 while our overall population grows by 77%. We are home to a significant immigrant and refugee population, with many Somali and Latino residents. We are projected to net more than 50,000 new jobs this decade for a growth rate of 18%. However, our region has larger racial disparities in labor force participation and unemployment rates than Minnesota statewide average; a state that ranks among the worst in the country on many measures of racial disparities.

Workers of color in Central Minnesota face multiple and significant barriers to securing high quality jobs. While there is no single solution to reduce these disparities, it is critical that we embrace innovative policy tools. The USEP creates incentives for employers to invest in job training and recruiting nontraditional workers to manufacturing jobs, which pay an average of \$25.19/hour in Minnesota.

We applaud L.A. Metro for using the U.S. Employment Plan to create jobs in our region. If transit agencies in other states can create jobs in Minnesota, we should do the same.

Sincerely,

Dale Moerke, Co-chair



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