



May 1, 2019

Dear Members of the Minnesota Senate:

On behalf of the 2,300 members of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and the roughly 500,000 employees they represent, I respectfully ask you to support HF 1555, the Omnibus Transportation finance bill (Senator Newman).

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce supports a safe, reliable, and efficient multi-modal transportation system in Minnesota to ensure businesses are able to get their goods to market and their customers and employees to their door.

In 2017, we made important progress in the effort to increase investment in our transportation system, working alongside Governor Dayton, the Legislature and many other stakeholders. In the current biennium, funding for transportation has increased at a rate of just over \$100 million per year – equal to about a 3.5 cent gas tax increase. Starting July 1 of this year, when the new biennium begins, that will increase to a rate of more than \$200 million per year – equal to about a 7 cent gas tax increase. We are pleased that HF 1555 maintains this significant funding increase. This funding increase will help to meet the long term needs that exist within our transportation system. Equally as important, however, it will bring important diversification to the state's transportation funding mechanisms because it's derived from the statewide sales tax on rental cars and auto parts.

It is our hope that as HF 1555 moves off of the Senate floor and into Conference Committee, more work will be done to address the long term funding challenges facing the metro area bus transit system. Similarly, it is our hope that the final version of this bill that emerges from the Conference Committee will make allowances for the testing and development of autonomous vehicle technology here in Minnesota.

While we highlight these as areas for improvement in HF 1555, we ask you to support this bill because it will achieve an important priority for the statewide business community: preserving the meaningful work done in recent years to increase and diversify funding for transportation in the state.

Thank you for your consideration. We respectfully ask for your yes vote on the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DL", is positioned above the typed name of the sender.

Doug Loon
President
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce