

Jon Koznick
State Representative
Chair
Transportation Finance and Policy
Dakota and Scott Counties



Minnesota House of Representatives

March 24, 2025

Representative Jon Koznick, Chair
House Transportation Finance and Policy
Minnesota House of Representatives
658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Sean Duffy, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy,

Minnesota is excited to congratulate you on being appointed as the Secretary of Transportation and is eager to partner with you to ensure transportation needs are met, by focusing on funding the modes of transportation Americans and Minnesotans use most.

We write to bring four projects with financial concerns to your attention. Federal funding should be closely scrutinized and eliminated.

- **Northern Lights Express (NLX)** commuter line from Duluth to St. Paul – This line is in the planning stage. A previous legislature allocated \$194.7 million hoping for federal grants to build out the NLX line. We have the strongest concerns about ridership and state cost, as we face a projected \$6 Billion state deficit. Without Federal grants this project will cease, and we will more responsibly repurpose the state's \$194.7 million set aside to meet other transportation needs and general fund deficit concerns.
- **Northstar Commuter Rail** – Big Lake to Target Center in Minneapolis. I previously wrote to inform you of our state's intention to decommission this line due to low ridership, high operation subsidies and high maintenance cost. We are asking for a waiver of any federal obligations to end NorthStar and allow us to redirect funds more efficiently.
- **Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension** – Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park LRT. There is significant concern that this \$4 billion line will be over budget and another boondoggle with minimal ridership and huge capital, operating and maintenance costs. We believe the area could be equally served with less expensive Bus Rapid Transit or Express Bus. Federal funds for LRT will cause Minnesota to invest more funds than necessary, opposed to other less expensive options.



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- Interstate 94 Land Bridge and I94 Greenway – St. Paul. We need to keep Interstate 94 between St. Paul and Minneapolis open to move people and commerce. Turning it into a greenway, boulevard or anything other than the interstate freeway would seriously impair interstate commerce and traffic patterns in the area. There are capital cost and maintenance concerns with adding a Land Bridge in the Rondo area.

Secretary Duffy, I greatly appreciate your attention and the federal government's assistance in helping to absolve the Northstar Commuter Rail obligations and prohibiting other boondoggles that generate additional waste for Minnesota taxpayers.

My office and colleagues remain available to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Koznick".

Representative Jon Koznick, Chair
House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa M. Demuth".

Representative Lisa Demuth
Speaker of the House
Minnesota House of Representatives

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Niska".

Representative Harry Niska
GOP Floor Leader
Minnesota House of Representatives

