

Jon Koznick
State Representative
District 58A
Lakeville, Dakota County



Minnesota House of Representatives

COMMITTEES:
HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE & POLICY
STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE & ELECTIONS
TRANSPORTATION FINANCE & POLICY

March 4, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Duffy,

I am writing to inform you that the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) have recently expressed their plan to formally notify the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of their intention to terminate operations of the Northstar Commuter Rail Line. This aligns with legislative efforts in Minnesota House of Representatives to discontinue the service due to low ridership and high operating costs.

Since its inception, Northstar has failed to meet ridership projections and has become a significant financial burden on taxpayers. Despite an initial \$347million investment from federal and state funds nearly 20 years ago, Northstar has failed to meet its original ridership estimates and then cratered during the pandemic. Unlike other transit services in Minnesota, the Northstar service has never rebounded and is only at 16% of already struggling with pre-pandemic service levels. The line currently operates on an \$16 million operating budget with a ridership subsidy of roughly \$116 per ride or \$232 round trip. Given these realities, it is evident that Northstar is no longer viable transportation solution for our region. In fact, I and others have been advocating to terminate this service for many, many years.

The Metropolitan Council and MnDOT will need to work with your office and the FTA to discuss winding down this service. I appreciate your attention and greatly appreciate the federal government's assistance in absolving and resolving any financial obligations quickly and reasonably to not further the financial burden on Minnesota taxpayers. My office and colleagues remain available to assist you.

Sincerely,

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

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



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cc:

Congressman Tom Emmer, House Majority Whip
Kelley Brookins, Region Five FTA Administrator
Matt Welbes, FTA Executive Director
Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council Chair
Nancy Daubenburger, MnDOT Commissioner

Congressman Tom Emmer, House Majority Whip
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