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Hello Representative Hortman:

We are writing on behalf of our members, associates, and supporters to ask that you support funding for the MnDOT state passenger rail plan.

All Aboard Minnesota is a non-profit citizen advocacy group that represents more than 2,500 members, friends and supporters throughout the state that actively seek more rail passenger service statewide as a needed transportation option. Over the past three years we have held informational meetings with citizens, civic and business leaders in several Greater Minnesota cities generating strong support for expanded passenger rail, to provide new and improved service from the Twin Cities to 30 greater Minnesota communities, and connecting us to the upper Midwest.

OUR ASK: please provide funding in your Bonding Bill to fund the MnDOT State Rail Plan. A total of **\$30 Million** is requested to accomplish the following in this biennium:

- ❖ **\$10 Million** for the second train from St Paul to Chicago.
 - Will allow Minnesota to apply for Federal Matching Grants and would **complete Minnesota's share of the cost to enable this service.**
 - Federal matching funds/grants are available for capital and operating expenses.
 - Wisconsin is moving forward with \$10 Million budgeted for their share.
 - Amtrak will provide funding for initial operating startup.
 - Would generate 155,000-180,000 new riders every year, taking people out of cars, reducing highway maintenance costs, and providing a positive net economic return to the state. (See attachments - *Three Great Reasons & Impacts from a Second Train to Minnesota*)
- ❖ **\$18 Million** for the Northern Lights Express trains serving the Twin Cities Metro, and Duluth with intermediate service. This project is "shovel ready" and will provide initial matching funding for track, signal, crossing, and station improvements.
- ❖ **\$2 Million** to develop initial plans for the extension of service from the Twin Cities to Fargo-Moorhead and service from the Twin Cities to the South including Albert Lea, Des Moines, and Kansas City.

Why is it important to fund the MnDOT Passenger Rail Plan this year?

- ❖ Provides the backbone of a state-wide public transportation and transit network benefitting college students, families with children, seniors, disabled, and those who can't drive or fly, as a mobility option.
- ❖ Provides economic stimulus, jobs, local investment, tourism, and a positive ROI for Minnesota.
- ❖ Utilizes public-private partnerships with freight railroads and Amtrak, minimizing capital expense and operating costs using existing infrastructure.
- ❖ Leverages current low bonding costs and generous/available Federal matching grant programs.
- ❖ Provides economic competitiveness with other states in the upper Midwest such as Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan which have made significant investments in passenger rail.

Minnesota deserves a multi-modal all weather transportation network that serves all of its citizens with the options they need. Highways and airways can no longer do this alone. The Minnesota legislature needs to act and provide funding for more passenger trains. Our economic vitality is at stake.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have and much more information can be found on our site: www.allaboardmn.org. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Best Regards
Board of Directors
All Aboard Minnesota

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