



MINNESOTA PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

April 6, 2020

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Speaker Melissa Hortman
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka
3113 Senate Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent
2227 Senate Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt
267 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Scott Newman
Chair, Senate Transportation
3105 Senate Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Frank Hornstein
Chair, House Transportation
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz and Legislative Leaders:

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Minnesota Public Transit Association which is comprised of transit systems all across the state – urban, suburban and rural. First, we want to thank you for recognizing public transit personnel as essential workers, recognizing the critical role that transit systems play all across the state to maintain a viable infrastructure for the delivery of essential goods and services. As you know, our Minnesota transit systems are experiencing historic drops in ridership and income while still working to maintain critical services to Minnesotans needing kidney dialysis, medical appointments and trips to other key destinations.

We are hearing from our member systems about difficulties they are having obtaining personal protective equipment for bus drivers, sanitizing products for the buses, maintaining payroll for staff and keeping volunteer drivers and trying to come up with the local match required to access state and federal funds. Systems in Greater Minnesota are experiencing ridership drops of 30-80% and are very concerned about how sustaining their systems during this crisis and ramping back up again when the crisis ends, including maintaining drivers if there is no allowance to pay furloughed drivers. Suburban transit systems are among the hardest hit as commuters work from home.

Our volunteer driver programs are also being impacted. Some programs have had to suspend or reduce service as many drivers are between the ages of 62-72 years. Some transit systems are starting to deliver meals, prescriptions from pharmacies and are trying to fill other needs in their communities such as transporting homeless individuals between a day shelter and evening shelter.

All transit systems in Minnesota will need assistance as their budgets are hit - both by the loss of local revenue and the anticipated loss of dedicated funds such as the motor vehicle sales tax and metropolitan area sales tax.

In addition to an increase in state appropriations for transit, systems in Greater Minnesota would benefit immensely from an exemption from the usually required local match for the second half of fiscal year 2020 as many may find it difficult to meet the requirement. We anticipate that exempting systems in Greater Minnesota from the required local match would have an impact on the state of roughly \$9 million and would allow systems to continue to access critical state funds that are designated for transit without interruption.

Thank you so much for all the work you are doing to keep our state working and providing key services that people need to live their lives during this difficult time. Transit systems will continue to work hard to provide for the people in their communities who need access to medical services and other important destinations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Rempp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Craig Rempp
President

cc: Suzanne Sobotka, Policy Analyst