



Senate

State of Minnesota

March 17, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As members of the Minnesota Senate Transportation Budget and Policy Division, we work to provide the citizens of our state with a safe and efficient transportation system. We are committed to enacting policy that will prevent highway fatalities, along with providing the funding resources to preserve, improve, and expand our transportation infrastructure. However, achieving this goal is not something that can be accomplished unilaterally. We need strong partners, at both the local and federal level, to truly meet Minnesota's transportation needs.

That is why we write you today to urge you to support increased federal funding for transportation projects nationwide. The passage of a transportation funding reauthorization bill is imperative for the economy and transportation safety of both our state and nation, and something that needs to be accomplished in short order.

We have seen first hand the benefit that comes from increased federal funding for transportation, not only in terms transportation safety and mobility, but in stimulating the economy. In the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the investment in our nation's transportation and infrastructure totaled \$62.5 billion. However, this 6 percent for transportation provided half of the jobs created by the ARRA. Clearly, investing in our nation's infrastructure gets people back to work. We feel these efforts need to be built upon to continue to generate economic recovery in our state and nation.

Further, there are safety concerns across our nation that warrants immediate action and investment. For example, we call attention to U.S. Highway 14, which spans southern Minnesota. This highway has a higher crash and fatality rate than any other similar two lane highway in the state. It also has a heavy truck traffic volume above the state average and portions of this highway are counted as the busiest in the state.

Several stretches of this highway need to be expanded from two to four lanes to accommodate these safety concerns and improve traffic capacity, including the portion from New Ulm to North Mankato and that from Owatonna to Dodge Center. Residents of southern Minnesota have waited almost forty years for these projects to be completed,



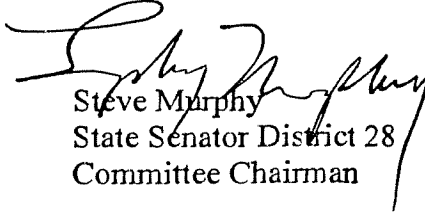
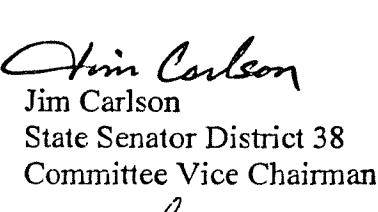
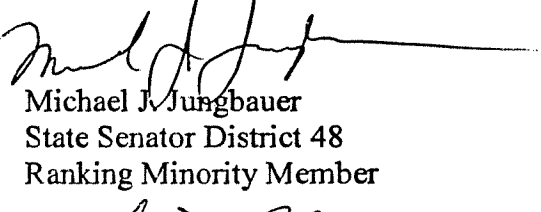
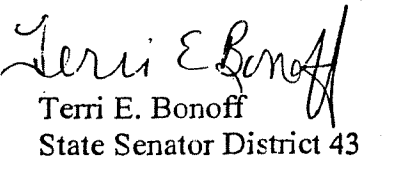
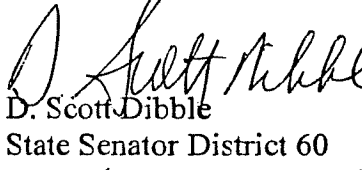
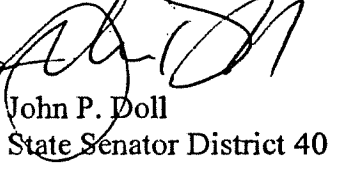
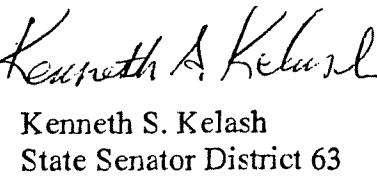
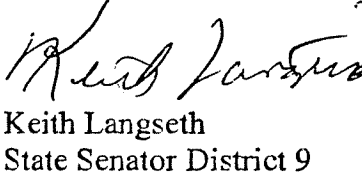
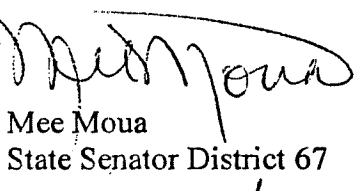
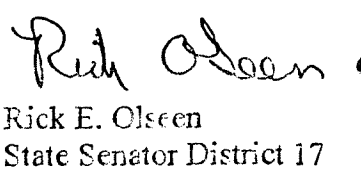
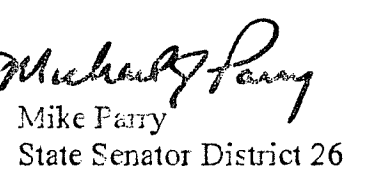
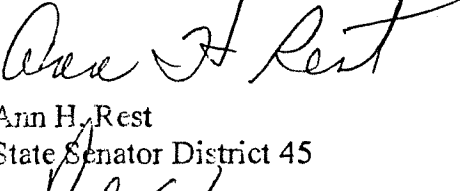
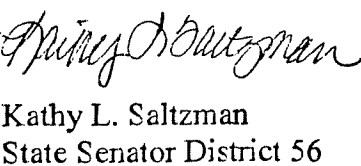
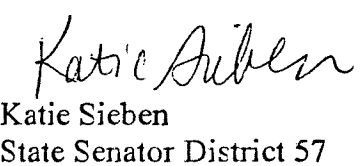
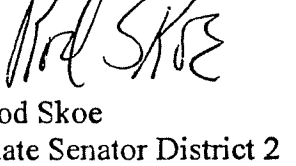
and have been told that they can expect to wait another twenty before adequate funding materializes.

The New Ulm to North Mankato portion is estimated to cost \$300-350 million. Altogether, the project components of the Owatonna to Dodge Center segment approximate \$170 million. With annual budgets at \$40-50 million, the Mn/DOT Districts can't realistically program these projects without displacing nearly every other road need in the Districts for years.

This important safety project is one of the many examples of large projects that are something that Minnesota cannot do alone. We need federal assistance to prevent additional unnecessary traffic fatalities and provide the infrastructure needed to promote economic development along this corridor, and the numerous other corridors in our state that need safety improvements.

We call upon you to work with Congress to swiftly enact a federal transportation investment, so further progress can be made in addressing the safety and economic needs of our state and nation. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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