

# BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN

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## JOEL J. MUELLER

Chairman - Minnesota State Legislative Board

The Honorable Timothy Walz  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
130 State Capital  
St. Paul MN 55155

The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher  
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Blvd.  
St. Paul MN 55155

November 19<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear Governor Walz, and Commissioner Anderson Kelliher

On behalf of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, representing Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen working on all railroads throughout the state of Minnesota, I am writing you today in support of the Northern Lights Express passenger rail project connecting the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul to the Twin Ports of Duluth MN and Superior WI.

A tremendous amount of work has been done by many groups and individuals to get this project to where it is today. The timing could not be better, with many people realizing the environmental benefits of passenger rail service as well as the convenience of traveling by train, many citizens in our state are embracing public transportation by rail therefore reducing the number vehicles on our roads.

The Northern Lights Express will carry veterans from Northern Minnesota to the VA clinic. As well as allowing other Minnesotans better access to all of our great hospitals and clinics in the metro area. Students will be able commute to and from many of Minnesota's distinguished Colleges and Universities on a regular basis. This rail project will allow sports fans to be able to get to all of the stadiums in the metro area. With Duluth being the gateway to the natural wonders of Minnesota's arrowhead, many vacationers will be using this service to get there. With more workers realizing the benefits of working from home this project will also allow for workforce development outside the metro area.

With the passage of the of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act last week billions of dollars will be soon available for investment in passenger rail. The Northern Lights Express is the most shovel ready passenger rail projects in the nation. We urge the Walz administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to act swiftly in seeking the federal funds for this project and seize the opportunity to connect the Twin Ports with the Twin Cities via passenger rail.

The hardworking Engineers of the BLET stand ready to operate the trains of the Northern Lights Express. We urge you to make this rail project a priority in the next Legislative session and work aggressively to seek these new federal rail dollars once they become available.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our position on this project. If you have any questions feel free to contact us.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel Mueller", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joel Mueller  
Chairman BLET  
Minnesota State Legislative Board