

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Duluth Campus

Office of the Chancellor

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February 1, 2017

Joint Powers Alliance Board
Northern Lights Express
111 Station 44 Road
Eveleth, MN 55734

RE: Letter of Support

On behalf of the University of Minnesota Duluth, I am writing in support of the Northern Lights Express (NLX) Project. UMD endorses a passenger rail transit system between Duluth and Minneapolis and believes that it will have a positive effect on attracting and retaining students at UMD.

In fall 2016, approximately 40% of our students came from the Twin Cities. Greater connectivity between Duluth and the Twin Cities will only strengthen UMD's attractiveness to young people in the Metropolitan area. In fact, a 2016 study by the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Company found that, from a sample of 2,000 college students, 68% said that they would consider frequent rail travel opportunities when considering which college or university to attend.

The NLX Project could greatly enhance the economic impact UMD has on Duluth and the region. The ease of using a passenger rail transit system could be very attractive to the families and friends of our students. In addition, UMD has nearly 28,000 alumni who live in the Twin Cities who could utilize the Northern Lights Express to come to Duluth to visit campus, shop, dine, and spend a weekend.

The entire Twin Ports area has much to gain if the NLX becomes a reality. UMD would certainly be a significant benefactor. It is for this reason and more that UMD supports the Northern Lights Express Project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lendley "Lynn" C. Black
Chancellor

FEB - 3 2017