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Congress of the United States
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June 21, 2017

The Honorable Patrick T. Warren
Executive Director
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Warren,

I write to bring your attention to a proposed high-speed intercity passenger rail project – the Northern Lights Express (NLX) - that intends to provide much needed service between Minneapolis, Minnesota and Duluth, Minnesota, and the cities in between. This vital service would utilize 152 miles of existing BNSF Railway tracks, and boost Minnesota’s and the Midwestern economy immediately.

Recently, the NLX completed their Tier 2 project level Environmental Review in consultation with the FRA making them officially eligible to receive Federal design, construction and equipment funding. Throughout the Environmental Review process, the NLX showed their commitment to cooperate and prove that there are no service-wide environmental effects associated with this project.

As a high-speed rail transit provider, the NLX will provide several benefits and a positive return on investment to the Midwest Region and State of Minnesota. Specifically, the project will create approximately 3,100 jobs annually during construction, 380 jobs annually during the first five years of operation in addition to improving and encouraging existing and new businesses along the corridor. Furthermore, the NLX will boost tourism revenues of \$378 million, which will support 10,600 jobs, and wages of \$233 million over a 40-year period. The addition of the NLX will increase property values along the corridor and provide more incentive for real estate and business investment in rural communities that are in need of an economic enhancement.

From an environmental sustainability standpoint, the NLX is dedicated to developing and utilizing equipment that preserves air quality and is fuel efficient, which will ultimately reduce any environmental impact on habitats and water resources. Considering the NLX will cause a shift from transport by automobile to train travel, this project would reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions resulting in a saving of an estimated \$47 million.

Lastly, the NLX will provide an enormous benefit to the Region and State’s Freight economy and operation. Explicitly, it will deliver greater mobility and proficient Regional access for business people and communities, improve the efficiency of logistics

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for shippers, and enhance the safety and reliability of freight via rail. In addition, the NLX plans to invest in grade crossing improvements, which is a major safety and quality of life issue in the Midwest Region. This investment will boost safety at rail grade crossings, which will lessen road and freight congestion, and reduce crashes for both trains and automobiles by up to 130 crashes over 40 years.

As the FRA works with the President on developing an infrastructure package, I urge you to include this project on your list of priorities for Federal investment. While we wait for an infrastructure proposal from the Administration, I strongly support all NLX applications for Federal funding, including for the Transportation Investment Generation Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program, the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program, the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant program, and the Restoration and Enhancements program, and ask for your support as well.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important matter. I firmly believe this project will provide an enormous benefit to the State of Minnesota and the Midwest Region. If you have any questions please contact my Legislative Assistant Eddie Wytkind at Eddie.Wytkind@mail.house.gov or at 202-225-6211.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Nolan".

Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress