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## **Advocates laud legislation to fund Highway 14 expansion from New Ulm to Nicollet**

ST. PAUL, MINN.—Highway 14 advocates are hopeful that legislation introduced today at the Minnesota Legislature will finally fund a long-awaited project that aims to improve a stretch of Highway 14 that has long been plagued by dangerous crashes and impeded economic growth.

The bill, [SF 703/HF 538](#), authored by Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls) and Rep. Jeff Brand (DFL-St. Peter), provides \$85 million in state trunk highway bonding funds to expand the 12-mile segment of Highway 14 between Nicollet and New Ulm from two lanes to four. The proposal has strong bi-partisan support from legislators along the Highway 14 corridor.

“We are lucky to have a great team of legislators who are committed to the shared goal of improving Highway 14,” said Karen Foreman, president of the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership and a member of the Mankato City Council. “We are especially grateful to Senator Dahms, Representative Brand, and the bi-partisan group of legislators who signed onto this important legislation. I look forward to working with them to make sure this project becomes a reality.”

For members of the Highway 14 Partnership, who have been working for decades to expand Highway 14 to four lanes from New Ulm to Rochester, the Nicollet-to-New Ulm project is the final segment that remains unscheduled and unfunded. Significant progress has been made in recent years, including in 2018 when the Legislature passed \$400 million in trunk highway bonds for the state’s Corridors of Commerce program, including \$160 million to complete a 12-mile segment between Owatonna and Dodge Center. The Highway 14 Partnership is working with the state to ensure that construction on that project can begin as soon as possible.

“Having four lanes all the way from Rochester to New Ulm is vital to unleashing the economic potential of southern Minnesota,” Foreman said. “While we are happy that progress has been made over the last few years, there is still more work to do to ensure that Highway 14 is able to adequately serve businesses and communities across our region.”

Rep. Brand, who introduced the bill in the House, noted that safety concerns play a major role in the need to have consistent four-lane access along Highway 14.

“Highway 14, from Nicollet to New Ulm, is the most dangerous stretch of highway in Greater Minnesota,” Rep. Brand said. “Completion of this project has been a long time coming and I'm proud to lead on this bill in the House.”

Sen. Dahms, chief author of the Senate version of the bill, added, “Families that live along this corridor deserve to be able to get to work or school safely, and businesses deserve an efficient transportation network that helps them get their products to market. In fact, as communities like New Ulm continue to grow, a four-lane road connection across southern Minnesota communities is absolutely essential to the future success of the local economy. I look forward to working with the tireless local advocates who have worked to make Highway 14 expansion a reality. It’s time to get the job done.”

*The U.S. Highway 14 Partnership is an advocacy organization supporting the four-lane expansion of Highway 14. Formed in 1998, the Highway 14 Partnership includes local governments, private businesses and other organizations across southern Minnesota. Follow the U.S. Highway 14 online at [ushighway14.com](http://ushighway14.com) on Twitter at [@Hwy14Pshp](https://twitter.com/Hwy14Pshp).*

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