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# Highway 14: A Road Too Narrow

## Supporters of Highway 14 expansion to four lanes testify at Capitol

February 14, 2013  
The Journal

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By Josh Moniz  
Staff Writer

ST. PAUL Supporters of Highway 14 four-lane expansion presented their case to a Minnesota Senate committee on Wednesday at the Capitol.

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Aaron Lambrecht of New Ulm-based Shelter Produ...

A bill introduced in the Senate calls for \$431.6 million in funding for the remaining two-lane segments of Highway 14. The funding splits \$219 million for the segment between Owatonna and Dodge Center and \$212.6 million for portions from New Ulm to Nicollet. The money would be put aside for up to five years.

A companion bill, which has the exact same proposals, is moving through the State House.

Highway 14 gained attention in the last few years as possibly the most dangerous highway in Minnesota. The segment between New Ulm and Mankato was determined to have a fatal crash rate three times the state average for similar highways, according to a report by Minnesota Department of Transportation. Advocates of the four-lane expansion project have argued it is the only way to improve safety on the highway as well as unleash significant economic growth for cities with heavy trucking like New Ulm.

Several members of the Highway 14 Partnership testified on the importance of the expansion.

Aaron Lambrecht, of the New Ulm-based Shelter Products, said he was so concerned over how dangerous Highway 14 is that he will not let his kids ride the bus to school. He said his wife personally drives them, and that they bought a vehicle explicitly for conditions on the highway.

Other members of the partnership testified on their own experiences with the highway's dangers. Testimony also indicated that business growth was being stunted by the two-lane segments.

The bill requires the MnDOT commissioner to put the expansion of Highway 14 on its 20-year plan. MnDOT indicated last year it was unlikely to include Highway 14.

The hearing was part of several highway corridor hearings for the Senate Transportation and Public Safety Division committee. The projects are being put aside for future inclusion in an omnibus bill to be voted on later in the session.

The House version of the bill is waiting for a hearing.

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