



April 26, 2019

Members of the House of Representatives:

As President of the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership and a member of the Mankato City Council, I write in support of the funding for Corridors of Commerce included in House File 1555, the omnibus transportation bill. Highway 14 between Rochester and New Ulm is the most densely populated stretch of road in Greater Minnesota without a continuous four-lane connection. As a result, the remaining two-lane portions of the road are dangerous and inefficient, putting our families and friends at risk and inhibiting southern Minnesota's economic growth.

Advocates in southern Minnesota have worked for decades to expand this dangerous highway. Since its creation in 2013, the Corridors of Commerce program has enabled more progress than had been achieved in decades, including four-lane expansion between Mankato and Nicollet approved in 2013 and the expansion of 12 miles between Owatonna and Dodge Center approved last May. We are sincerely grateful for the bi-partisan work that went into achieving this progress, and we look forward to construction beginning on the Owatonna-to-Dodge Center project soon.

But our work is not done. Twelve miles of Highway 14 between Nicollet and New Ulm remain a dangerous two-lane stretch of road. When the House Transportation Finance Committee visited Mankato in March, members heard hours of heartrending testimony from individuals who have lost children, loved ones, neighbors, and friends on Highway 14. It is time to finish the job so that no more families have to suffer an unnecessary tragedy.

While we have expressed concerns about aspects of the Corridors of Commerce program, including the project selection process and criteria, it remains the only mechanism in state law to fund vital expansion and safety projects like Highway 14 and many others across the state. We sincerely thank Chair Hornstein for including it in this omnibus bill, and ask all members to support funding for Corridors of Commerce this legislative session.

Thank you for consideration and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Karen Foreman
Mankato City Council Member
President, U.S. Highway 14 Partnership