

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 6, 2004

The Honorable Jenna Dorn
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Dorn:

We write to express our strong objections to the Metropolitan Council's request to delay until April 30, 2005, the opening of the Hiawatha Light Rail Line in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

From its earliest planning stages, we have and will continue to strongly support the Hiawatha LRT line. An FFGA amendment is necessary to make modest changes to the project, and we fully support these changes that will increase ridership and enhance Hiawatha's success.

However, we believe that the Metropolitan Council request to delay the Hiawatha in-service date until April 2005, is an unfair attempt to extract concessions from workers in an ongoing labor-management contract dispute.

There is no legitimate construction-related reason to delay the opening of the Hiawatha Light Rail Line for an additional 13 months. Senior management of Metro Transit, the builder-owner-operator of the Hiawatha LRT, freely acknowledges this fact, which reinforces our suspicions that the Metropolitan Council seeks to unfairly influence labor negotiations.

Therefore, while we support the underlying FFGA amendment application, we strongly urge you to reject the Met Council's request to delay the Hiawatha Light Rail Line opening until April 2005.

Sincerely,



Martin Olav Sabo
Member of Congress



James L. Oberstar
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress