Minnesotans depend upon a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation network to support the movement of people and commerce, the work of our first responders, and the continued growth and vibrancy of our state and local communities.

In 2017, the Legislature and Governor passed the largest investment in our state’s transportation infrastructure in roughly a decade. The 2017 bill will generate an additional $2 Billion in funding for the state’s transportation system over the next 10 years. It does this by broadening transportation’s base of financial support to include roughly 50% ($145 million) of the annual revenue generated from the statewide sales tax on auto parts.

The importance of the 2017 funding bill can’t be overstated. The Legislature and Governor marked an important milestone in the ongoing effort to fund our state’s important transportation infrastructure needs. They provided new, significant, and desperately needed funding for our system. But the work isn’t done.

Because the 2017 bill capped the use of the auto parts sales tax revenues at $145 million per year, this important funding source won’t grow over time to help offset ever-increasing construction costs. Additionally, it means roughly $150 million a year in transportation related sales tax revenues can’t be accessed to help fund the completion of critical projects across the state each year.

In 2018, we have an opportunity to build on the accomplishments of 2017 Session. The 2018 Legislature should give Minnesotans the chance to ensure that highway dollars are used for highway purposes by constitutionally dedicating all of the sales tax on auto parts to Minnesota’s roads and bridges. Doing so will mean another $150 million per year for our roads and bridges.

Dedicating these funds would make it far more likely that we can help Greater Minnesota by building a network of ten-ton roads that connect with the trunk highway system, adequately fund the Corridors of Commerce program, and fix deficient bridges.

By capturing the “full take,” the Legislature would prioritize a mere 0.6% of the state’s budget for transportation infrastructure, a move supported by a strong majority of voters. Recent polling shows that fully 76% of Minnesotans, including over 80% of Republicans, and over 70% of Democrats and Independents, would vote for the amendment to dedicate these funds – constitutionally – to roads and bridges.

Our organizations agree. We stand ready to support the Legislature in taking the logical next steps toward securing the safe, efficient, and reliable transportation network that supports the entire state by asking Minnesotans to constitutionally dedicate these funds to transportation infrastructure. And we will encourage Minnesotans to follow through by voting YES in November.