



CONNECTING & INNOVATING
SINCE 1913

March 9, 2018

The Honorable Representative Betty McCollum
United States House of Representatives
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McCollum:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments on federal budget priorities on behalf of the City of White Bear Lake and the League of Minnesota Cities.

In highlighting federal budget priorities for cities, I first want to emphasize the importance of certainty and stability in establishing the federal budget. When Congress fails to meet their own budget and spending deadlines, we as city governments are forced to speculate about federal grant funding in determining our budgets. The possibility of massive federal funding shifts and reductions makes it very difficult for cities to plan long-term.

City budget priorities are closely tied to the infrastructure discussions also taking place at the federal level. Though the President supports spending \$200 billion for infrastructure, his budget would cut more than \$200 billion in existing infrastructure projects. We call on Congress to partner with us and invest in our vision to rebuild and reimagine our city, state and country's infrastructure. We ask Congress to: support adequate and reliable long-term funding for transportation infrastructure that reflects local needs and priorities; increase investment in federal programs that expand broadband infrastructure; and support additional funds for the Environmental Protection Agency's state clean water and drinking water revolving loan accounts.

The City of White Bear Lake is committed to improving transit for our residents within our city and region. A Bus Rapid Transit line, known as the Rush Line, is currently being developed and continued funding is critical to this project's completion. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program has enabled White Bear Lake to maintain a senior housing complex exclusively for income-qualified seniors. Through CDBG, we have also maintained a building that houses a youth and family services program. These funds are essential to ensuring our residents receive the services they need and expect from their city.

Cities provide the most basic and the most critical services to citizens across Minnesota: streets, sewers, water, public safety and parks. To do so, we can only borrow, bond and tax our residents so much. We look to Congress to partner with us in ensuring adequate funding for the services Minnesotans rely on every day.

Thank you for the work that you do on behalf of Minnesota and for soliciting input from Minnesota cities. Please do not hesitate to contact me or League of Minnesota Cities Federal Relations Coordinator Ann Lindstrom at 651-281-1261 for additional information or questions.

Sincerely,

Jo Emerson, Mayor, White Bear Lake
President, League of Minnesota Cities