

Great River Rail Commission

News Release

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Great River Rail Commission

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Governor Walz Includes Second Train in Biennial Budget

January 31, 2023 (Red Wing, Minn.) – Governor Walz has included the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor (TCMC) Second Train in his 2024-2025 biennial budget recommendations.

The Governor's budget increases Minnesota's contribution to match a federal grant for track and signal improvements in Winona and La Crescent, as well as Minnesota's estimated share to match another federal grant for startup operating costs.

Great River Rail Board Chair Trista MatasCastillo is pleased with the inclusion of the TCMC in the budget noting it shows confidence in the project to partners in neighboring states, as well as stakeholders in Minnesota. "We appreciate the years-long commitment in this budget proposal. It provides the level of financial stability and commitment this project needs at this time, and we look forward to what the future holds for the TCMC and the state of Minnesota," said MatasCastillo.

The Governor recommends:

- \$940,000 in FY24 and \$980,000 in FY25 for capital improvements on the corridor due to inflation pressures
- \$893,200 in FY24 and \$2.258 million in FY25 to cover the matching costs of a federal grant, which defrays initial operating costs of the TCMC passenger rail line for the first three years of service
- \$122,000 in FY24 and FY25 for staffing for project management and grant administration
- \$4.876 million beginning in FY26 to support Minnesota's portion of the operating cost

Supporters of the TCMC are encouraged to sign up for the Great River Rail newsletter at greatriversrail.org to stay abreast of opportunities to advocate for the Second Train this legislative session and learn about other advocacy and educational opportunities for the Great River Rail.

About the Commission

The Great River Rail Commission is one of the leading voices on passenger rail in Minnesota. The Commission advocates for the development of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) Second Train project, a daily round trip passenger train between the Twin Cities and Chicago which received capital funding for track and signal improvements from the Minnesota Legislature in 2021. The Commission's long-range vision is that the Second Train demonstrates additional demand that leads to further investment in faster, more frequent passenger train service. More information is available at greatriversrail.org.

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Photo: Trista MatasCastillo, chair, Great River Rail Commission

Graphic: TCMC