

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2254**  
**Transportation**  
**January 30, 2025**

**Dale Bergman, Public Transportation Director**  
**City of Grand Forks, ND**

Chairman Clemens and members of the committee, my name is Dale Bergman. I am the City of Grand Forks Public Transportation Director for the Cities Area Transit (CAT). I am a member of the Dakota Transit Association, and a member of The Community Transit Association of America (CTAA). I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 2254.

We are a small urban transit property that provides fixed route bus service and complimentary paratransit service for elderly, senior and disabled clients who are unable to make it to a fixed route bus stop for their travel needs in the large urban cities. We are at all time highs in ridership since 2013 with 282,270 in 2024 which is an increase of 8.25% over 2023 and continues to climb, along with our paratransit ridership increasing to record highs of 56,681 rides in 2024. We take people to the places they need and want to go. We're connecting people to careers and opportunities with flexible transit options as part of a diverse and vibrant community of customers.

The current state-aid formula covers the elderly and disabled people riding the service in mainly the rural areas, but in the large cities we transport all individuals', adults, students, seniors, and disabled. They have needs like all of us to get to work, medical appointments, grocery shopping and daily living needs. They can be our neighbors, friends or family members that need the rides we provide. The current state funding formula only covers a small percentage (8%) of our services. The Federal portion is 50% percent, and the local match portion is 42% of a 3.5-million-dollar budget for operations. Our costs of service in the last 5 years have increased dramatically by over 40% for operations for labor, fuels, parts and supplies.

The cost of a 35-foot large, fixed route bus is currently \$700,000 and that does not include the cameras, CAD/AVL system and driver safety items we are required to have to protect drivers, passengers, and the city for insurance claims for accidents and injuries. The cost for a cutaway vehicle is currently at \$151,450 again without the safety equipment needed. These costs for vehicles have gone up 50% in the last 5 years and have caused a severe strain on our budgets.

With strain on the budgets of the city, we may not be able to continue the services as they currently are or add any additional services requested. The transportation services for the citizens will affect many parts of their lives from job access to medical care to even buying food for their families.

We ask for at DO PASS on SB 2254 to address the short term funding needs and the study for funding public transportation needs in the future.

Respectfully,  
Dale Bergman  
Public Transportation Director  
City of Grand Forks