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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 5488

05/20/2024 Authored by Koegel and Hortman The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Transportation Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to transit; establishing a pilot program for free transit service for certain
1.3 students, educational staff, and attendees of athletic events; requiring a report;
1.4 appropriating money.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. FREE TRANSIT SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.

1.7 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have
1.8 the meanings given.

1.9 (b) "Athletic event" means an in-person sports game, match, or activity involving athletic
1.10 skill of the players.

1.11 (c) "Council" means the Metropolitan Council.

1.12 (d) "Pilot program" means the free transit service pilot program under this section.

1.13 (e) "Qualifying student or staff member" means an individual who is:

1.14 (1) a public or nonpublic school student in grades 9 through 12;

1.15 (2) a student attending a public or private accredited postsecondary institution in
1.16 Minnesota; or

1.17 (3) a teacher or staff member at a school or postsecondary institution that serves students
1.18 specified under clause (1) or (2).

1.19 (f) "Regular route transit" has the meaning given in Minnesota Statutes, section 473.385,
1.20 subdivision 1.

2.1 Subd. 2. **Pilot program established.** (a) The council must establish a pilot program for
 2.2 transit service free of charge as provided in this section. The pilot program must operate
 2.3 from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026.

2.4 (b) The requirements under this section apply to operators of regular route transit (1)
 2.5 receiving financial assistance under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.388, or (2) operating
 2.6 under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.405, subdivision 12.

2.7 Subd. 3. **Transit service for students and educational staff.** During the pilot program
 2.8 period, the council must provide regular route transit free of charge for a qualifying student
 2.9 or staff member who presents a valid photographic identification card from the school or
 2.10 postsecondary institution.

2.11 Subd. 4. **Transit service for athletic events.** (a) The council must seek to enter into
 2.12 separate agreements with professional sports teams and postsecondary institutions for transit
 2.13 service under the pilot program. Each agreement must specify a transit service cost allocation
 2.14 among the sports team or postsecondary institution, the council, and the state. An agreement
 2.15 that includes cost allocation from state sources of funds must provide for funding from an
 2.16 alternative source absent an appropriation in law for purposes of agreements under the pilot
 2.17 program.

2.18 (b) During the pilot program period, the council must provide regular route transit free
 2.19 of charge for a person who exhibits a ticket, whether in physical or electronic form, for
 2.20 entrance to an athletic event that:

2.21 (1) includes at least one event participant that:

2.22 (i) is a professional sports team in this state or is a sports team of a public or private
 2.23 accredited postsecondary institution in this state; and

2.24 (ii) has entered into an agreement with the council as provided in paragraph (a); and

2.25 (2) takes place on the day in which transit service under this subdivision is being provided.

2.26 Subd. 5. **Report.** By March 1, 2026, the council must submit a report on the pilot program
 2.27 to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction
 2.28 over transportation policy and finance.

2.29 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION; FREE TRANSIT SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.**

2.30 \$..... in fiscal year 2025 is appropriated from the general fund to the Metropolitan
 2.31 Council for purposes of the free transit pilot program under section 1. This is a onetime
 2.32 appropriation and is available until June 30, 2027.