



**volunteer driver**  
COALITION

July 23, 2021

Tim Henkel, Chair  
MN Council on Transportation Access  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Office of Transit and Active Transportation

Dear Assistant Commissioner Henkel,

Minnesota's Volunteer Driver Coalition writes this letter first to thank you for the leadership and support of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) to define a volunteer driver in state statute and to create an income tax subtraction for volunteer drivers. These changes in state law will strengthen volunteer driver programs by removing some barriers to recruitment and retention. We appreciate your partnership and advocacy on behalf of volunteer drivers and people served by volunteer driver programs.

At this time, the Coalition is turning its attention to important advocacy that needs to be undertaken at the federal level. As you know, the current Charitable Mileage Rate is set at 14 cents per mile. This rate was determined in 1998 when the costs of owning and insuring a personal vehicle were much lower and the business rate itself was 32.5 cents per mile. While the business rate is adjusted each year by the IRS, there is no mechanism to adjust the rate for miles driven in service to a charitable organization. Knowing the essential role that volunteer drivers play as part of the transportation system, the Coalition's position is that volunteer mileage should be reimbursed at the business rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to reflect the actual costs of owning and driving a personal vehicle for charitable purposes. Volunteer drivers contribute at a high level by donating their time, reducing isolation for riders and providing access to medical care for thousands of Minnesota residents. Their mileage should be reimbursed relative to costs and they should not be subject to income tax on any reimbursement that falls within business rate set by the IRS.

We write this letter to ask MCOTA to lead an advocacy initiative with our state's Congressional delegation to gain their active support to increase the Charitable Mileage Rate for volunteer drivers to match the business rate set by the IRS. Your leadership to hold meetings with our federal elected officials is the most promising avenue to move this issue forward into the federal policy change process at a meaningful level. The Volunteer Driver Coalition will support your efforts as we did for the recent legislation passed on the definition and state income tax subtraction provisions.

Thank you for your consideration. The Co-Chairs of the Coalition would be happy to meet with you to discuss our request. We know that MCOTA supports this change as they indicated at their meeting of July 2020 and we trust will elect to act now to make this a priority issue for 2021 and 2022.

Thank you, again, for your support of volunteer drivers throughout our state. These individuals demonstrate the very best of neighbor helping neighbor.

Sincerely,



Dawn Simonson, Co-chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition  
President and CEO, Trellis, Metro Region Area Agency on Aging



Mary Quirk, Co-Chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition  
Executive Director, Living at Home Network



Lori Vrolson, Co-chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition  
Executive Director, Central MN Council on Aging  
Immediate Past Chair, Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging



Sherry Munyon, Co-Chair, Volunteer Driver Coalition  
MN Public Transit Association/Capitol Access

C: Tom Gottfried, Executive Director, MCOTA