



Administrative Office  
201 N. Broad St., Suite 102  
Mankato, MN 56001

MINNESOTA RIVER  
Area Agency on Aging®

**September 29, 2021**

**In re: Minnesota Council on Transportation (MCOTA) Public Comments – 10-01-2021**




**Subject: Volunteer Driver Coalition – Federal Advocacy**

Good afternoon. My name is Jason Swanson, and I am the Executive Director of the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, President of the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Co-Chair of the Minnesota Volunteer Driver Coalition. It is with this former that I am here today.

On behalf of the Volunteer Driver Coalition, I would like to thank all for your support in defining what a volunteer driver is in Minnesota State statute and created an income tax subtraction for our volunteer drivers. This is a tremendous success for the over 1,900 volunteer drivers that provide transportation services to over 75,000 Minnesotans.

The Coalition know turns it 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 ensuring 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.

On behalf of the eighty-five (85) organizations that make up the Minnesota Volunteer Driver Coalition, we ask you, the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access, to lead an advocacy initiative with our state's Congressional delegation to gain their active support to increase the

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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.

With the incredible success we were able to attain last legislative session, we feel now is the appropriate time to continue to advocate for our communities so that they can provide this essential service of transportation. We are stronger when we work together to make change that will have benefits for countless Minnesotans.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration in the manner. All the best.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason W. Swanson, HSE

Executive Director – Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

President – Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging