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Citizens League  
530 Syndicate Building  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

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STATEMENT OF THE CITIZENS LEAGUE ON MOVING TRAFFIC ON I-94 DURING CONSTRUCTION

There need not be nearly so great a problem of congestion on I-94, due to the closing of lanes.

It is a congestion of vehicles. And most of the vehicles are nearly empty.

What we should be trying to move between the two cities is people, not vehicles.

It would be possible to continue to move large numbers of people rapidly between the two cities . . . if only more fully-occupied vehicles were admitted to the remaining freeway lane. The current policy is simply to admit the maximum number of cars, on a first-come/first-served basis, with no thought about people.

We urge a change in that policy to give preferential access to buses and car pools, voluntarily, if possible, but mandatory if necessary.

We appeal to motorists who are driving alone to stay off I-94 at least during the morning and evening rush hours and, if possible, at other times during the day, during the next two months, leaving the available freeway lane in each direction to buses and cars with more than one occupant.

We recommend a widespread campaign to make it unwelcome, from a civic responsibility standpoint, for persons who are driving alone to use I-94. We seek the cooperation of the mass media in this effort.

If the program is successful, then the Metropolitan Transit Commission could be able to run express buses between the two downtowns as rapid alternatives for persons who otherwise might drive their own personal cars, alone down University Ave. or some other route.

We urge the Minnesota Highway Department to evaluate this week the success of the voluntary approach to discouraging single-occupant cars from using I-94. If it is not sufficient to assure adequate traffic movement, we believe that the Department should consider prohibiting single-occupant cars from using I-94 during peak-traffic periods while the construction improvement is under way.

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Beginning today and continuing until August 16, the Minnesota Highway Department is closing all but one lane of I-94 in either direction for most of the distance between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis, for construction of a median barrier and pavement repairs. I-94, particularly in the vicinity of the University of Minnesota, is one of the most heavily-traveled freeways in the metropolitan area.

The partial closing of I-94 represents the type of opportunity which is so urgently needed, as we found in our recent report "Building Incentives for Drivers to Ride", to develop meaningful alternatives to the single occupant car.

Deliberately discouraging single-occupant cars from using I-94, thereby giving preference to car pooling, will offer to motorists who have been driving alone an incentive--not heretofore possible--to ride together.

The result will be faster travel for everyone than otherwise would be possible, even for single-occupant cars which will be taking alternate routes. Single-occupant cars, should then continue to take I-94 during peak travel periods, will only produce congestion that will increase their own travel time and that of vehicles with more than one occupant. By choosing alternate routes, persons who must drive alone will be making a positive contribution towards helping transit with no personal sacrifice on their part.

Throughout the metropolitan area, during morning rush hours, there are an average of 13 occupants in every 10 cars, according to the Travel Behavior Inventory, a 1970 survey of travel patterns, conducted by several transportation agencies in the Twin Cities area. This means that at least seven out of 10 cars have no more than one occupant, the driver.

If I-94 is jammed, it is not because too many people are trying to use the freeway. I-94 easily could handle the number of people, if more of them rode together. The excessive reliance upon the single-occupant car imposes an unnecessary waste of limited freeway space and under-utilization of capacity in vehicles.

Several major benefits emerge from giving preference to buses and car pools on I-94:

- \* Car pooling is likely to continue even after all lanes of I-94 are reopened, which will benefit both the people who ride together and the single-occupant cars by helping reduce congestion in the long run.
- \* It can be a contribution to easing any possible fuel shortage which might emerge this summer.
- \* It will lessen congestion for tourists passing through the Twin Cities area during summer months.
- \* It may show a new, effective, way to reduce congestion on other freeway sections of the Twin Cities area which, from time to time, will require repairs.
- \* It will turn a current problem, congestion on I-94, into an opportunity, to find ways to ease congestion in the long run.