

## Bill to relocate Le Sueur rest stop, allow Cambria expansion passes Senate committee

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A bill that would allow the Minnesota Department of Transportation to sell a Hwy. 169 rest stop has passed a Senate committee.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Kevin Dahle, D-Northfield and co-sponsored by Kathy Sheran, D-Mankato, last week received strong bipartisan support. A companion bill in the House is sponsored by Rep. Kelby Woodard, R-Belle Plaine.

The bill, according to a release from Dahle's office, "provides for a fast-track relocation of the Highway 169 rest area in Le Sueur, allowing Cambria to acquire the land it needs to expand its business and create local jobs."

"Cambria has a history of strong growth, and moving this rest stop to another location in Le Sueur will give them the space they need to continue their recent expansion," said Dahle. "As an important job provider in our area, it is critical the state of Minnesota helps the company spur economic growth. This bill allows Cambria to expand its operations and create as many as 500 new jobs."

During the bill's hearing, Dahle was joined by Le Sueur Mayor Bob Broeder and Scott Peterson, the director of government affairs at MnDOT. Both spoke in support of the relocation, and of the expansion of Cambria.

Rebecca Arndt, spokesperson for MnDOT District 7, which includes Le Sueur, isn't sure how quickly the land would be sold, provided the bill passes the legislature.

"The bill provides a vehicle to allow MnDOT to work on a (purchase) agreement," she said Friday. "It won't speed up the process, it's allowing us to consider (selling)."

MnDOT has often been criticized as slow-moving when it comes to selling land. Arndt agreed that the department isn't in the business of selling land, noting it's responsible for the swift flow of traffic which more often includes land acquisition.

The stop, according to Le Sueur County records, is nearly 28.5 acres and has an assessed value of \$439,500.

And though Dahle's announcement noted the rest stop's relocation, Arndt said, "There are no plans yet for how and when and where to move the rest stop."

The city could benefit even more from the proposed sale and move if MnDOT relocates the rest stop on a portion of land just to the northwest owned by the city and set aside for an industrial park.

"When this bill reaches the floor of the Senate, the choice will be between land-locking a successful company or creating a healthy environment for economic growth," Dahle said. "I think we can all agree that this is common-sense economic development that must be supported."

Any sale, Arndt said, would need to be approved by the commissioner of the Department of Transportation.