

***Association of Metropolitan School Districts
Association of Minnesota Counties
Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities
League of Minnesota Cities
Metro Cities (Association of Metropolitan Municipalities)
Minnesota Association of School Administrators
Minnesota Association of Small Cities
Minnesota Association of Townships
Minnesota Inter-County Association
Minnesota Rural Counties
Minnesota School Boards Association
Municipal Legislative Commission
North Metro Mayors Association
Range Association of Municipalities and Schools
Southeastern MN League of Municipalities
Schools for Equity in Education
Southwest MN Council of Mayors***

August 10, 2022

Dear Governor Walz, Lieutenant Governor Flanagan and Members of the Minnesota House and Senate:

As associations representing the state's local partners – its school districts, counties, cities, and townships, encompassing all citizens of our state -- we are aware of the significant challenges and needs local leaders face amid an uncertain economy and the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

Since the adjournment of the legislative session on May 23rd, we have repeatedly been asked by our members and the citizens we represent whether there will be a special session. This is not a casual ask of curiosity, but a plea and passion for us, as their representatives, to press forward to encourage your action and hold a special session.

During the 2022 legislative session, school district, county, city, and township leaders articulated needs for state support, some of which received consideration in bills that were not finalized before the conclusion of the session. Challenges faced by your peers – our locally elected officials – are at a high point and state resources play a critical role in the provision of many local services. There are many issues that need attention now and that should not wait until 2023.

Minnesota is proud of the historical partnership between the state and local governments. A strong partnership has long been imperative to ensuring local officials have the resources to address statutorily directed services that are provided locally. Local services are essential to our

quality of life and vitally important to ensure the continued health, safety, welfare, and education, for all Minnesotans. Our citizens rely on us to provide services and we rely on you for the ability to provide the same. When a breakdown occurs – at any point – issues surface and frustrations can arise.

We know you all understand the significant issues local governments are currently experiencing and we appreciate the consideration given to local issues and needs during the session. As partners, we want to work with you on our legislative needs and priorities and why a special session is so important.

We can provide many examples of pressing local needs. Generally, they include labor shortages that hinder the provision of public safety services including police and fire staffing, rapidly escalating costs to provide local services, social services, and the education of Minnesota's students. Local leaders are also working to improve deteriorating infrastructure but are doing so without appropriate state investments. There are urgent needs for funding the state's social service and mental health support services to address substantial challenges being experienced by families and communities. School districts are confronting widespread challenges for students that will only compound without necessary resources. Delays in addressing matching funds for the federal Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and a bonding bill to address transportation, transit and infrastructure projects will result in higher costs, disjointed planning, and economic losses.

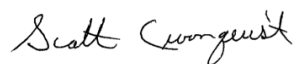
Local governments also are faced with issuing local regulations as a result of the new THC law. Prompt establishment of a state framework and parameters for regulation, established by lawmakers in partnership with local governments, is needed now. Not addressing a framework until next year is a recipe for a patchwork quilt of local laws that are likely to be inconsistent from one community to another.

We are therefore writing to respectfully, yet strongly, encourage the prompt convening of a special session to finalize supplemental budget and tax bills, the development of a capital investment bill and other critical unfinished business including state matching funds for the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, addressing the growing special education cross subsidy, and addressing a framework for the regulation of cannabinoid products. We call upon state leaders to continue engaging with us, your local government partners, to finalize legislation that will serve the entire state.

The state's historically large budget surplus provides an unprecedented opportunity for Minnesota to address the state's immediate and critical needs. We ask all state leaders to use this opportunity and to return to the work at hand. Minnesota's local governments, and the state's residents, business, families, and students are depending on you.

Now is the time for action: we stand ready to work with you and appreciate your attention to our request. Our constituents are your constituents. Let's work together in the next few weeks to complete the business started months ago and, in the end, benefit all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director
Association of Metropolitan School Districts



Todd Patzer
President
Association of Minnesota Counties



Brian Holmer
President
Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities



Ron Johnson
President
League of Minnesota Cities



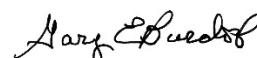
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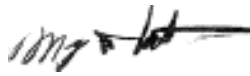
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