

# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

April 17, 2017

The Honorable Kurt Daudt  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Room 463, State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Paul Gazelka  
Majority Leader of the Senate  
Room 3113, Minnesota Senate Building  
95 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Speaker Daudt and Majority Leader Gazelka:

You have requested information about our concerns with the Omnibus Budget Bills that passed out of the House and Senate during the past several weeks. Attached for your reference are 55 letters, totaling 179 pages, which our Commissioners have sent to your Committee Chairs, outlining their concerns with your budget bills.

With a \$1.5 billion remaining budget surplus projected for the next biennium, we reject the notion that services to Minnesotans should be arbitrarily reduced. The Base Levels of funding for each agency reflect continuations of the programs, which previous legislatures and governors approved in statute. At a minimum, those Base Levels of funding should be retained.

However, if your Conference Committees are going to continue to propose their cuts to agencies' operating budget, we insist that they must also specify what programs, services, or cash assistance they want to stop providing the people of Minnesota. We will not begin to discuss any budget cuts, which do not provide that specificity. Furthermore, any budget reductions must be comprised of actual savings – not conjectures. We have attached the March 13, 2017 letter, which outlines additional details regarding our priorities for a successful conclusion to the Session.

You have requested that we be fully engaged in the negotiations to come to a successful end of the Session. You can be assured that in addition to our regular communications, we will be talking daily to our Commissioners and staff to inform their discussions with your Committee Chairs. Two years ago, the Leaders – Speaker Daudt, then-Majority Leader Bakk, and the two of us – met around the clock for five days. Those meetings resulted in a chaotic conclusion to the Regular Session and a Special Session, because bills with funding levels and policies, to which we did not agree, were passed at the very end. That end-of-session gamesmanship must not be repeated, if we are to have a successful and timely conclusion to this Session.

The details of the State Budget should be negotiated by our Commissioners and your Committee Chairs – the content area experts – guided by the priorities we each bring to improve the lives of Minnesotans. We also expect that those negotiations will include DFL Legislators, who will provide valuable expertise, and whose views will help inform our considerations.

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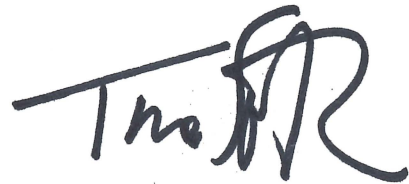
Once your Conference Committees have signed their Committee Reports, which will establish the levels of funding and the policies to which they have agreed, and after MMB has verified that those spending calculations are accurate and that, in sum, they comprise a balanced biennial budget, then we, as Leaders, can begin the final negotiations to resolve our remaining differences. If you and your Committee Chairs address the concerns outlined by our Commissioners and your DFL colleagues, we trust there will be little left for us to discuss.

When you return from your recess, there will be five weeks left in the Session, during which we must reach those agreements. We believe that we share the goal of a timely resolution by the Constitutionally established deadline of May 22<sup>nd</sup>. By working well together, we can achieve that goal.



Mark Dayton  
Governor

Sincerely,



Tina Smith  
Lt. Governor

Attachment

cc: Senator Tom Bakk, Senate Minority Leader  
Representative Melissa Hortman, House Minority Leader