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April 6, 2022

Senator Tom Bakk  
328 Capitol  
75 Rev. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Bakk and members of the Senate Capital Investment Committee,

On behalf of the more than 135 cities, counties, businesses, non-profits, and individuals that comprise the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails organization, we thank you for the work you and your committee have been doing through tours, individual meetings, and other efforts to construct a bonding bill that will address much needed infrastructure throughout the state of Minnesota. As you begin hearings to assist in this work, we wanted to offer our comments on the governor's bonding proposal, SF4413, and specifically encourage you and the committee to support parks and trails in Greater Minnesota and throughout the state as you construct your bill.

We appreciate that the Governor included \$1 million for parks and trails local and regional grants under Minn.Stat. 85.019, but we encourage you to dedicate more funding to these programs. We urge you to look to the example set in [SF513](#), authored by Senator Carrie Ruud, and increase the funding for these grant programs.

While Minnesota's state parks and trails are an invaluable asset, they are geographically out of reach for many citizens due to distance or a lack of trail connections. That is why local parks and trails are such an important part of our communities, especially in Greater Minnesota. In addition to daily recreational opportunities, local parks and trails promote economic development. As communities strive to attract younger workers, as well as promote healthy living for all ages, local facilities are indispensable. These grant programs are especially important to our members because Greater Minnesota is at a disadvantage with respect to parks and trails funding in the state budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact either of us. We would love to work with you to ensure that Greater Minnesota's parks and trails continue to thrive and grow.

Sincerely,

Ben Anderson  
Chair, Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails  
Stearns County, Parks Director

Gina Hugo  
Vice Chair, Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails  
Sherburne County, Parks Coordinator

Cc: Nathan Jesson, Policy Advisor  
Senator Sandy Pappas, Minority Lead Senate Capital Investment Committee  
Senator David Senjem, Vice Chair Senate Capital Investment Committee  
Senator Carrie Ruud