



March 7, 2022

**\*Sent via Email**

The Honorable Senator Abeler, Chair  
Committee on Human Services Reform Finance and Policy  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3215  
95 University Avenue W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Support for SF 3140**

Dear Chair Abeler and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for hearing [SF 3140](#) and to Senator Senjem for authoring the bill. Olmsted County urges your support for this legislation to provide funding for emergency shelter facilities. There is significant need across Minnesota to support individuals, youth, and families experiencing homelessness and state investment will help meet these temporary housing needs.

In October 2019, housing partners from across Olmsted County came together with the Corporation for Supportive Housing to develop community strategies to address unsheltered homelessness. In response, the local housing partners collaborated in the development of the Rochester Community Warming Center. The warming center emergency shelter is open during the evening hours with 42 beds available for individuals to have a warm place to sleep, shower, utilize laundry facilities, and receive food each night.

Since 2020, through partnerships, collaboration, and innovation with local, state, and federal housing programs, Olmsted County has created over 200 units of housing opportunities for its most vulnerable residents. In addition to creating housing options, the county Housing Stability Team of seven social workers was formed to help people find and maintain housing.

The current warming center (shelter) was designed to meet an immediate need and was intended as a short-term solution and has now become functionally obsolete. Olmsted County, the city of Rochester, and other local housing partners are beginning planning efforts for a more permanent solution. SF 3140 would provide much needed support for these efforts to create a long-term plan for shelter, and more importantly, a pathway to stable housing for our most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your consideration to invest state funding for urgently needed emergency shelter facilities throughout the state. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Thein", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Mark Thein, Chair  
Olmsted County Board of Commissioners  
[thein.mark@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:thein.mark@co.olmsted.mn.us)