

April 4, 2022

TO: Chair Mary Kiffmeyer and Members of the Senate State Government Finance and Policy and Elections Committee

FROM: Kent Whitworth, Director and CEO 

RE: SF 3975 - Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission Provisions

Thank you for your continuing support for the work of the Minnesota Historical Society. As you work on the 2022 Omnibus State Government Finance bill, the Minnesota Historical Society would like to call to your attention a policy provision contained in the bill.

Article 2, Section 34 (lines 20.28 - 20.29) of the SCS3975A-1 Delete-everything amendment, deletes an appointment by the Minnesota Historical Society to the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC), and replaces it with an appointment by the State Historic Preservation Office. The Minnesota Historical Society would appreciate deletion of this provision.

The Minnesota Historical Society has been a participant in the work of the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission for decades. One of the main tasks of the Commission is to promote and preserve the nationally significant features of the Mississippi River in Minnesota, also known as the Great River Road, including historical and cultural features. Some of these features include historic sites operated by the Minnesota Historical Society, including the Forest History Center, the Oliver H. Kelley Farm, Mill City Museum, Historic Fort Snelling, among others. The Minnesota Historical Society has worked closely with the Commission, including partner agencies to assist with the promotion of these nationally recognized features.

In more recent years, the Commission, both on the state and national levels, has worked to reinvigorate the system of designated Interpretive Centers to ensure that visitors are aware of the many opportunities of the Great River Road. Many of these centers are MNHS historic sites. The Minnesota Historical Society has contributed to this effort through the work of its staff across the state.

The duties of the MN-MRPC fit directly into the work of the Minnesota Historical Society. In contrast, the State Historic Preservation Office is primarily a regulatory office whose mission does not fit closely into the work of the MN-MRPC. **We would appreciate removal of this provision in the bill to permit continued participation of the Minnesota Historical Society on the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission.**

cc: Senator David Senjem, Chair, MN Mississippi River Parkway Commission