



March 15, 2022

**RE: S.F. 534 – Emergency Management Readiness Grants**

Dear Chair Limmer and Members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a voluntary association representing all 87 counties, I am writing in support of S.F. 534. We thank Senator Weber for authoring the bill Chair Limmer for hearing the bill in this committee.

As the last two years have proven, emergency preparedness is an important part of public safety that often gets overlooked until a crisis occurs. Counties work very hard to be prepared for all emergencies but are limited by the resources available to them for those preparedness activities.

Every county is required to have an emergency manager. Emergency managers have significant duties including coordinating emergency response efforts, ensuring that emergency response plans are implemented correctly by emergency personnel, raising community awareness of emergency preparedness and response, and disseminating important information to the public. During the past two years, the work related to natural and manmade disasters has continued while emergency managers have simultaneously been on the front lines of COVID-19 pandemic response. These dedicated public servants have provided guidance to county administration and county boards on mitigations strategies, acquired and distributed PPE and other supplies, worked with state and other local governments to respond to the ever-changing situation, and much more.

It is important to note that these duties are required of all county emergency managers *no matter* what financial capabilities their counties have. While some counties may have significant financial resources, others are not so fortunate and may struggle to keep up with this state mandate.

Generally, state and local governments rely on federal grants to support emergency management functions, which are not a consistent source of revenue and change based on nationwide natural disasters. Federal funding through grants is unreliable and unpredictable. While funding coming from the federal government over the past few years has been most welcome, it cannot be counted on for long term planning and continuity of operations.

Proper emergency preparedness and emergency management requires dedicated, long-term resources that ensure all communities, no matter their financial abilities, have access to resources to plan for the unthinkable. **With this in mind, AMC strongly supports the ongoing \$3 million annual appropriation to counties in S.F. 534 and thanks Senator Weber for his authorship of this proposal.**

Sincerely,

Carli E. Stark, Public Safety Policy Analyst  
Association of Minnesota Counties