

Stephanie Chappell  
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Chair Pappas and Members of the Senate Capital Investment Committee  
Regarding MN Historical Society Capital Investment Request  
February 6, 2023

Dear Chair Pappas and Members,

The Minnesota Historical Society is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. It is not a state agency.

MNHS has invested millions of public bonding funds into its privately owned Mill City Museum while Fort Snelling's Round Tower crumbled and closed to visitors. The Round Tower is the State's oldest man made structure. Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) is statutorily obligated to protect, preserve, and promote Minnesota per Minnesota Constitution's Article 13, Section 10.

In addition to the Round Tower, other buildings and sites reflect negatively on the State. Fort Ridgely was closed and all displays removed yet funds were given for "security" cameras. The loss of the site has impacted the local economy's venues and events.

Other sites fear the Round Tower's fate. The Sibley Historic Site continues to decay. The Faribault House's front entrance has crumbling bricks and loose railings while the rear entrance has a piece of plywood guiding visitors over a mud hole. The Sibley Historic Site contains three buildings dating to 1836 and the home of Minnesota's first Governor, Henry Sibley. MNHS contracts the site to Dakota County yet maintenance continues to be MNHS's responsibility (Statute 138.669 and Historic Site Management Agreement 2021-2023). Under the Minnesota Constitution and Public Law 89-665, MNHS is responsible for preservation of State owned assets like the Sibley Historic Site, Fort Ridgely, and Historic Fort Snelling.

MNHS has committed egregious, abusive and negligent acts in conflict with their duties under MN statute and federal law. Any funding must include stringent guidelines put in place including management of any projects by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

MNHS has proven it cannot be trusted with public funds intended for preservation and upkeep of State building assets. Again, MNHS is a nonprofit, not a State agency and should not be treated in any other manner. No Minnesota Historic structure and building asset should ever be closed due to negligence by MNHS. Will the Faribault House suffer like the Round Tower did?

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Chappell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Chappell