

Stephanie Chappell  
2401 14<sup>th</sup> Street E  
Glencoe MN 55336

Chair Pappas and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee  
Regarding SF677 Individual Bonding Projects  
February 21, 2023

Dear Chair Pappas and Members,

SF677 has forgotten to vet recipients' open Legacy grants, project outcome, and organization missions. Bonding is not to be used for cultural enhancements or interpretations. These additions are to be pursued elsewhere such as Legacy or private sources. Recent history has proven nonprofits have dishonest motives.

Please remove projects with questionable backgrounds especially Wakan Tipi, Pilot Knob and Somali Museum until each has been thoroughly reviewed.

**Section 6 Metropolitan Council Subdivision 2 St. Paul; Lower Phalen Creek Project** (LPCP). Project funding needs review and additional oversight by the Office of Grants Management and Management and Budget due to a lack of completion of past grants administered through nonprofit Minnesota Historical Society and questionable actions of the nonprofit's members. Carver's Cave, now referred to as Wakan Tipi, has been neglected since the area has become a construction site for a Dakota religion center. The Cave entrance has been lost time and again due to debris falling from the bluffs. History reports industrious attempts to reopen the cave using Boy Scouts and backhoes with no interest from Indigenous groups until after 2005 when local Dakota circulated rumors portraying the cave as a center for Dakota religion. However, this is not supported by hereditary chief Leonard Wabasha of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. The cave has become a gathering place for transients and graffiti artists. Please see pages 31-37 of Minnesota Caves History & Lore by Greg Brick, PhD (2017. History Press. Charleston, SC) for more scholarly observations about the sacred cave turned dump.

Further, LPCP sponsors events aimed to misinform the public regarding the cave's history, its uses and inhabitants. In events and public information meetings including those "for Indigenous audiences" the nonprofit group rallies attendees using racist and supremacist statements. At an event in May 2022 at Historic Fort Snelling, LPCP followers accused a woman of being racist because her statement included the name Sibley. A partner nonprofit with LPCP, Oyate Hotanin's Executive Board President Crystal Norcross threatened bodily harm due to the word Sibley. In the months following Ms. Norcross's behavior, her social media followers made death threats toward the individual. The incident was also used by Dakota activist Amanda Young to generate funding to create more racist incidents at Historic Fort Snelling.

Between LPCP and Oyate Hotanin, more than \$275,000 of Legacy Amendment grants currently are open including a \$118,000 Legacy Amendment grant to explore design of Wakan Tipi, the same purpose being funded in SF677. Other grants state they are "In Progress" even though the

funded activity closed, in some cases nearly 2 years ago. To award LPCP when it has open grants through the state is not advised.



Carver's Cave 2022 Courtesy Greg Brick



Carver's Cave 2005 Courtesy Greg Brick

**Section 6 Metropolitan Council Subdivision 14 Mendota Heights; Pilot Knob** is a biased project attempting to use public funds because previous nonpublic funds dried up. The initial development of the area was done through private donations. The area was developed under strict adherence to Dakota activists who refused to share the truth behind Pilot Knob. All literature promoting the current project begins after the mid 1700s. Prior to 1760, Dakota lived around Mille Lacs. Using guns acquired from French and British fur traders, Dakota ethnically cleansed the Iowa tribe from the Minnesota Territory. Pilot Knob was the last decisive battle and the bloodiest in the Dakota's thirst for land and resources. Pilot Knob is not sacred to the Dakota; it is a place where Dakota supremacy is marketed to the masses and all other tribal histories are erased. The project has heavy reliance on reshaping existing interpretation panels that will not better the area but further cleanse the Iowa from Minnesota Trails already exist as do gathering spaces. Diversity, inclusion and equity are not present in this project.

**Section 6 Metropolitan Council Subdivision 37 Somali Museum** A project for a Somali Museum was granted in 2022 because the project catered to the Somali community even though the application did not meet the guidelines for the Legacy grant. A comparison of the 2022 grant should be made to effectively determine whether this is a duplicate of the \$42,000 Legacy grant or contains new aspects that cannot be addressed through Legacy funds. Nonprofit MNHS has the full application while the MNHS's grants committee comments are viewable through nonprofit MNHS's website with employee cooperation.

Without investigating nonprofits or vetting their missions and projects under bonding's intent and Minnesota's Constitution, the public will suffer.

Thank you removing Wakan Tipi, Pilot Knob from SF677. and other questionable projects. Vetted organizations and their projects may be added to another bonding bill later in session.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Chappell