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The Honorable Fong Hawj
Chair, Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3231
St. Paul, MN 55155

January 24, 2023

Dear Chair Hawj:

On behalf of the City of Floodwood, we are writing to urge you to amend Article 2 of House File 172 and Senate File 442 which creates new criteria for entities applying for Legislative-Citizens Commission on Natural Resources grant dollars for capital projects. Of particular concern is the language requiring recipients of LCCMR grants for capital projects to provide a cash or in-kind match from non-trust fund sources of at least 50 percent of the total eligible project costs.

Capital projects in Greater Minnesota have benefited in recent years from LCCMR grants. Local governments and non-profits have been able to construct campgrounds, visitor centers, trails, and trail-heads to serve visitors from across the state of Minnesota. This new match requirement and additional layers of bureaucracy will negatively impact the ability of small cities and other organizations from seeking LCCMR funding. These new, restrictive LCCMR requirements will prevent communities and organization from seeking LCCMR funds.

We think it is in bad form for the Legislature to single out capital projects. Why would other non-capital project LCCMR grant recipients not have to provide a match? These new restrictions on LCCMR grant dollars appear to be an effort to prevent communities and organizations in Greater Minnesota from successfully seeking out an LCCMR grant award.

We would urge the Legislature to scrap the additional capital requirements in Section 3 of House File 172 and Senate File 442. At a minimum, we would urge the Legislature to fairly apply the match requirement to all LCCMR awards going forward, or to consider a reduced match requirement of 10%.

Please help communities and organizations across Minnesota by making LCCMR more accessible and reject the more restrictive language in House File 172 and Senate File 442.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tad Farrell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tad Farrell, Mayor

CC: House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee Members
Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee Members
Melissa Hortman, Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives
Lisa Demuth, House Minority Leader

Kari Dziedzic, Senate Majority Leader
Mark Johnson, Senate Minority Leader
Becca Nash, Director, Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources
Tim Walz, Governor of the State of Minnesota
LCCMR Commission Members