

April 2, 2023

To: The House Legacy Committee

Dear Members of the Minnesota State Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee:

We at The Great Northern wish to extend our deepest gratitude to the committee members for including an allocation for the festival of \$150,000 in FY23 and \$150,000 in FY24 in the Legacy Omnibus Bill. We urge you to vote to pass this bill, which will result in critical funding for our organization as we deepen our impact on the state.

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The Great Northern (TGN) is deeply rooted in this place, the people who live here, and the winter climate that in many ways defines us. We celebrate the arts, the outdoors, and our vibrant food scene, but our programming also serves as a call to action to protect winter. The festival partners with the region's leading arts and culture, outdoor, and climate organizations to add breadth and depth to its work. These partnerships allow us to pull audiences from many different sectors, from outdoors enthusiasts to cinephiles, and expose them to new experiences and ideas with which they wouldn't otherwise engage.

We believe that our distinctive platform unites Minnesotans around their shared love of winter culture and the outdoors. We also recognize that though winter is a joy for some, it is a hardship for others. TGN provides opportunities for invigoration, community building, learning, and sharing through programming that engages a multiplicity of cultural voices and provides a full picture of the North. The need to unite Minnesota's communities and find common ground has never been more urgent. TGN and its partners are committed to building equity and access in all of its programming.

To foster awareness and engagement among people of differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds, TGN commissions, co-produces, and presents offerings that explore the rich and diverse cultures of our region and expand the concept of Minnesota's winter culture to be inclusive of the region's population. TGN is committed to challenging prevailing narratives about who lives and thrives here by sharing the experiences of and reactions to winter from unexpected perspectives. This commitment is reflected in the multiple BIPOC artists who have and will comprise the festival's original programming.

THE GREAT NORTHERN

Funding from the State of Minnesota would be transformative for TGN, allowing us to invest even more heavily in our arts, outdoor, and climate programming, expand the depth and breadth of our service to the community, and challenge prevailing narratives about Minnesota winters. We want to build on our momentum to serve our audiences in bigger, bolder ways. We want to make the Twin Cities *the* winter destination the last week of January and first week of February every year. As Thrillist said, “Think South x Southwest, but North x Midwest”. We want to give a platform to the foremost thinkers and doers from around the world, using the power of art to inspire Minnesotans and visitors alike to expand their horizons and embrace our connections.

We thank the Committee Members for joining us in this call.

Respectfully,

The Great Northern staff