



March 31, 2023

Chair Erin Murphy
Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Committee
3211 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Murphy and Committee Members,

CURE – a Minnesota rural democracy organization dedicated to uplifting rural voices and strengthening rural places – wishes to express our support for the funding for the Attorney General’s budget for FY 24-25 in the State and Local Finance omnibus bill (1426).

Rural communities in Minnesota – like the ones CURE represents – have been the victims of corporate power since early in Minnesota’s statehood. While the industries taking advantage of rural Minnesotans may have changed over the years the impacts of corporate hegemony remain the same: lower wages, higher prices, fewer small businesses, and unchecked influence on public policy. In fact, since 2005 the U.S. economy has become 50% more concentrated and entire industries are dominated by just a few individuals.

In recent years Minnesotans have seen in stark detail the risks of this concentration of power in the marketplace. From groceries and prescriptions to home appliances and school supplies, companies have engaged in consumer price gouging practices and intentionally contributed to major supply chain issues to manipulate the market. For Rural Minnesotans in particular this consolidation has resulted in the emptying of once vibrant main streets, reductions in wages, and the elimination of critical community services.

It is clear: Minnesotans need additional antitrust protections.

CURE is appreciative of the action taken to date by the Attorney General’s Office to address anti-competitive conduct. However, in order to fully address the scale of the problem the Attorney General’s Office needs additional resources to increase capacity to protect Minnesotan consumers.

The funding for the Attorney General’s Office for FY 24-25 in SF1426 is a critical step towards alleviating our highly concentrated economy. On behalf of rural communities across Minnesota, CURE urges your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Erik Hatlestad
Energy Democracy Program Director
Clean Up the River Environment (CURE)