



February 1st, 2023

Chair Wiklund and members of the Health & Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative is a group of tribal staff from six northern tribes (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake and White Earth) who work together using state funding to end homelessness in our tribal communities. The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative is writing to express support for SF388. Homelessness disproportionately affects American Indians in Minnesota and the pandemic has increased this racial disparity. The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative has advocated for years at the state and federal level to end homelessness in Minnesota. The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative believes that with the incredible surplus that state leaders should be bold and end homelessness for all Minnesotans. We want to lift up three of the items listed in the legislation but we fully support everything included.

\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities

While the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative believes that more funding than \$150 million is needed to provide safe shelter for Minnesotans experiencing homelessness, please note we are writing this letter on a day that had a morning temperature of -20 with a windchill of -30. While the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative is advocating for much more in funding, we are pleased with \$150 million being included in SF388. Unfortunately, only a few of our tribal nations have shelter beds and all lack enough shelter beds to meet the need. MCH completed a statewide survey to gauge the needed state resources to build, acquire, or renovate shelters to meet the need. We've identified that more than \$200 million is needed to meet the shelter capital statewide that would create or preserve over 3,400 shelter spaces. Every tribal community in the state needs access to shelter spaces, and this statewide funding source would provide opportunities for shelters to generate new models to meet the need such as those that are culturally responsive, gender affirming, accessible, and are low barrier; shelter is the first step to finding permanent housing for families, individuals, and seniors experiencing homelessness.

\$40 million in 2024/25 and \$70 million in 2026/27 for the Emergency Services Program (ESP)

We are excited that SF388 includes our full request for ESP. This funding will allow organizations and local communities to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness through supporting shelters, outreach, motel vouchers, and other key resources and services. This increase will be key to supporting both new and existing shelters in providing services to people experiencing homelessness.

\$9 million for the Transitional Housing Program (THP)

Along with responding to our unsheltered homelessness crisis, SF388 includes funding for THP which is vital for many individuals and families leaving shelter. Several of the tribes that are part of the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative use this program to great success. THP helps individuals and families obtain stable housing where they can develop good rental history while finding a permanent housing destination.

In addition to the above priorities, MCH supports the remaining items included in SF388:

- **Homeless Management Information System**
- **Homeless Youth Act**
- **Homeless youth; chosen family grants**

We applaud the leadership for bringing this bill forward. Shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness. Please consider fully funding the continuum of housing and services so that Minnesota can end homelessness for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Tammy Moreland, Chair Minnesota Tribal Collaborative

