

Peoples Church, ELCA

824 America Ave NW
PO Box 2050
Bemidji, MN 56619



January 29, 2023

Chair Wiklund
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

Peoples Church, ELCA, in Bemidji is a multicultural faith community and emergency homeless shelter that has been operating for over 20 years. We serve about 250 of our community members every year with overnight and daytime shelter, meals, bathroom and shower facilities, hygiene supplies, information and referral, and companionship. More than half of those we serve are connected to the Red Lake, Leech Lake and White Earth Nations. For the past biennium we have enjoyed the support of Emergency Shelter Program funding from the state. We are so grateful for the opportunities this provides to share with people in our community.

As the Board President for Peoples Church I am writing to support the Pathway Home Act (SF388). The \$150 million included for Emergency Shelter Facilities will help shelters like Peoples Church who are "making do" with aging, outdated facilities, so that we may complete needed improvements such as air handling systems and cleanable surfaces to better minimize Covid exposure.

Also the increased funding for the Emergency Shelter Program through 2027 will enable shelters to remain open, providing high quality, safe, accessible and caring services for community members who are homeless and hungry.

We are so appreciative of your efforts to support our work on behalf of people experiencing homelessness. It is a privilege for Peoples Church, our Board members and staff to continue serving and sharing with our community members. Your concern for all the people of Minnesota makes this possible.

Please contact me if you would like any further information.

Sincerely,

Carol Priest
Peoples Church, ELCA
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Bemidji, MN 56619
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