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suite 260
mpls, mn 55402

March 29, 2023

Senator Bobby Joe Champion
Chair, Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee
3401 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairman Champion:

I am writing today in support of SF 3156, a one-time appropriation for infrastructure and other costs related to re-establishing Taste of Minnesota over the next three years as a staple of the summer event calendar in our State after many years of absence. The Minneapolis Downtown Council would serve as fiscal home for the state investment, working with a talented and highly experienced team led by Mike Schardin who are organizing the event, starting July 3rd and 4th of this year. In addition to state support, private sponsorships would help underwrite the event over this three year start-up phase.

From the standpoint of our organization, whose mission is to help insure the vibrancy, safety and health of the downtown economy and environment for all who visit, live and work here, re-establishing Taste of Minnesota couldn't come at a better time. It has been a challenging three year period for all of us, but one bright spot has been attendance and events and activities downtown. Over 8.5 million people visited downtown Minneapolis in 2022 for sports, theatre, music, conventions and hospitality, a number almost equal to per-COVID levels. Adding Taste of Minnesota, a safe, inclusive, accessible and FREE event to the mix, attracting over 100,000 Minnesotans to celebrate the Fourth, will accelerate that positive trend and help with overall recovery.

Thank you for your consideration of this appropriation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Cramer'.

Steve Cramer
mpls downtown council
President & CEO