



Ely City Hall, 209 E Chapman St, Ely MN 55731

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March 5, 2024

Senator Founj Hawj, Committee Chair  
Room 1150 Minnesota Senate Bldg  
95 University Avenue W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Kara Josephson, Committee Administrator  
Room 1150 Minnesota Senate Bldg  
95 University Avenue W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: International Wolf Center- Asset Preservation Project- Letter of Support**

Dear Senator Hawj:

The City of Ely is supporting the International Wolf Center's request for capital budget consideration in the 2024 legislative session. The Wolf Center building requires approximately \$2.150 million in improvements. It is critical to the tourism economy in Ely that the facility remains viable.

The Wolf Center has been in Ely since 1989 and serves more than 40,000 visitors on an annual basis. The facility is a major draw for out of state and international visitors and has a membership that is 70% people from outside the state of Minnesota. The Wolf Center has a full-time staff of eight with an additional ten part time employees and additional paid internships. This dedicated group provides an exceptional and unique education opportunity to our visitors.

The State-owned building requires HVAC replacement, full exterior renovation and drainage improvements to ensure the building continues to serve the 40,000 annual visitors and continues to be one of Ely's most popular destinations for tourism.

We thank the Senate and House of Representatives for the continued support of our projects and hope that this legislative session can benefit the needed improvements at the International Wolf Center Facility as well as the Ely Regional Trailhead Facility and the West End Redevelopment Projects.

Sincerely,

**City of Ely**

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Heidi Omerza, Mayor

Cc: Senator Grant Hauschild