



125 Charles Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55103-2108 | www.mncounties.org

April 16, 2024

Re: SF3887 (Hawj) Environment Supplemental Finance Bill

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is a membership-based organization representing all 87 Minnesota counties. **We appreciate the opportunity to address provisions included in your Omnibus Finance and Policy legislation (SF3887 DE7 amendment).**

AMC appreciates the great deal of work that the committee has done reviewing legislation this session and trust that you will continue to consider adjustments to proposals until final passage.

There are a number of positive policy initiatives and investments made in this proposal that are supported by AMC, including: State Lands Provisions; Composting Grants for Multifamily Buildings - \$2 million; Critical Materials Task Force - \$319,000; Keep it Clean Grants - \$1.418 million; and Manure Management Grants - \$2 million.

We would like to address one item of concern which is the **Sale of Land Within Indian Reservations** (Article 2, Section 22, Lines 41.22 – 45.2). This provision requires tax-forfeited land located within the boundaries of an Indian reservation to be offered for sale to the affected band of Indians before it is offered for sale to other parties. **It is critical to note that Minnesota statutes regarding the handling of tax-forfeited properties were determined to be unconstitutional by a unanimous decision of the U.S. Supreme Court.**

AMC is working with state legislators to change statute, creating a process that will meet a constitutional test (SF4985). SF4985 requires that all forfeited property go to public auction, so that the value of the property can be determined through the auction and any surplus returned to the prior owner. **The language in this proposal requires different treatment of certain properties that falls short of the new system requirements that seek to ensure prior owners receive the highest price for their property and the resulting surplus from that sale.** AMC would be happy to engage in further discussions about this proposal but believe the legislature first needs to finalize new tax-forfeiture procedures for Minnesota and see if a process can be developed that aligns with the new law.

Thank you again for your work on the many provisions in SF3887. We look forward to continued discussions with the author and committee on its omnibus finance and policy proposal.

Sincerely,

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