

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 2, 2024

RE: SF 4779 (Marty) and SF 4018 (Mohamed)

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members:

On behalf of Ecolab I am writing to encourage your support of SF 4779 and SF 4018. Ecolab recently hosted a Homelessness Summit in partnership with Ramsey County, the City of St. Paul, Catholic Charities, and business and non-profit leadership. As leaders of the Minnesota business and civic community, we all understand that safe and stable homes support a strong workforce and a stable economy that underpins our success. We also know that the absence of a home can lead to significant personal repercussions. Whether brought on by racial disparity or a health or financial crisis, there are many among us who are just one-step away from falling into homelessness.

In Ramsey County, the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness has risen sharply in recent years. The historic infusion of one-time funds have enabled Heading Home Ramsey and partners to increase shelter capacity and create more effective supports and interventions to move people from homelessness to housing. However, we are now at risk of losing significant shelter and service capacity and stable, long-term funding is needed. The Bridge to Shelter Bill and Heading Home Ramsey's requests for significant investments will fund critical interventions, including:

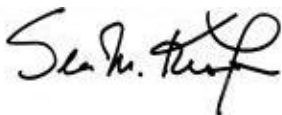
- Continued shelter and additional supports for families.
- Continued shelter operation for single adults, including expanded women's shelter options.
- Continued operation of day shelters and services.
- Outreach, diversion, system improvements and extreme weather support.

These interventions are designed to fill critical gaps while the \$74 million invested by Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul into the construction of deeply affordable housing comes to fruition.

These efforts would be a key component of our collective goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring – especially for people of color and indigenous people. In Ramsey County, people who are African American are 8 times more likely to be homeless than people who are white. People who are Native American/Indigenous are 14 times more likely to be homeless than their white counterparts. These unacceptable disparities must be addressed.

Thank you for considering their proposal at this time of critical need.

Sincerely,



Sean Keefer,
Vice-President, State Government Relations
Ecolab