



Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee
State Capitol Room 3401 SB
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee:

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for the confirmation of Matt Varilek as the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). As someone who has had the privilege of working closely with Matt during his tenure at the Initiative Foundation, I can attest to his exemplary leadership qualities, dedication to community development, and unwavering commitment to fostering economic prosperity.

During Matt's tenure as President of the Initiative Foundation, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand his visionary leadership and passion for advancing economic development initiatives in central Minnesota. His strategic thinking, coupled with his ability to inspire and mobilize diverse stakeholders, has been instrumental in driving positive change and creating sustainable impact in our region.

Matt's profound understanding of the economic challenges facing our communities, coupled with his innovative approach to problem-solving, has consistently yielded tangible results. Under his guidance, the Initiative Foundation successfully awarded grant money and provided crucial financial support for a wide range of economic development projects, contributing significantly to the growth and vitality of our region, including the Mille Lacs Tribal Economy.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Matt has been demonstrating the essential qualities necessary to excel in the role of DEED Commissioner since assuming the position in June of 2023. He is a collaborative leader who values input from all stakeholders and works tirelessly to build consensus and drive meaningful progress. His integrity, humility, and genuine concern for the well-being of all Minnesotans make him eminently qualified to lead DEED and advance its mission of promoting economic growth, employment opportunities, and prosperity for all residents of our state.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse Matt Varilek's appointment as DEED Commissioner and urge you to confirm his nomination without hesitation. His proven track record of leadership, his deep-rooted commitment to community development, and his unwavering dedication to serving the people of Minnesota make him the ideal candidate to lead DEED into the future.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of Matt Varilek's confirmation. Please feel free to contact me at jnayquonabe@mlcv.com if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Joseph Nayquonabe
CEO, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures
Commissioner of Corporate Affairs, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe