



Neighborhood Development Center

BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIES FROM WITHIN

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February 21, 2024

Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee

SUBJECT: Confirmation of Matt Varilek as Commissioner of DEED

Dear Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee,

I am pleased to provide this letter demonstrating my support of Matt Varilek being confirmed as the Commissioner of DEED. Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) has a long relationship with Mr. Varilek during his tenure at The Initiative Foundation. During that time he led efforts to bring the NDC model of community and economic development to the St. Cloud area and Brainerd.

One reason NDC was comfortable with IF taking on the model was because Mr. Varilek demonstrated time and again that he truly understood the work of supporting underserved and under represented entrepreneurs. He is an excellent listener, which is a critical asset in a leadership role. Mr. Varilek will be a wonderful representative as the Commissioner of DEED for **ALL Minnesotans**. He comes from Greater MN, and understands the unique dynamics that play out whether urban or rural, and he respects everyone.

ABOUT NDC

NDC has a 30-year history of providing entrepreneur training, small business loans, technical assistance, and real estate incubators. We have provided over \$30MM in lending to small businesses who would not be able to access financing through the mainstream economy. NDC works in the lowest income communities in Minneapolis and St. Paul, neighborhoods that have experienced historic disinvestment and racism.

I strongly encourage this committee to confirm Matt Varilek as Commissioner of DEED, and would invite any questions.

Sincerely,

Renay Dossman
President & CEO
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