



March 21, 2024

The Honorable Jennifer McEwen, Chair
Senate Labor Committee
3217 Minnesota Senate Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Gene Dornink, Ranking Minority Member
Senate Labor Committee
3411 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Hospitality Minnesota Opposition to SF 4708

Dear Chair McEwen, Ranking Minority Member Dornink, and Members of the Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on SF 4708 and raise concerns for consideration as this bill may impact hospitality businesses. Hospitality Minnesota is the trade organization for Minnesota's restaurants and foodservice, hotels and lodging, and resorts and campground sectors. We are proud to represent operators at and in the surrounding vicinity of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP).

MSP is a lifeline to tourism in Minnesota. Each year, over 30 million passengers pass through our award-winning, world-class airport. As hospitality operators, we have the opportunity to serve guests every step of the way, from MSP to the Twin Cities area to Rochester or Lake of the Woods – wherever their journey may take them. The recovery of our hospitality operators in Minnesota, particularly restaurants and hotels in the Twin Cities, has been slow and fragile. As an industry on traditionally thin margins of generally 2-5%, slow recovery, rising food costs and increased labor costs have made the last few years and the road ahead challenging.

SF 4708 does not account for the challenges our hospitality businesses face, nor does it account for our MSP operators who already operate with higher wages and benefit packages and may send employees between multiple locations. How does that operator account for a price differential in their other Minneapolis locations versus at MSP? With an already strained workforce, do their other locations lose employees who only want to work at MSP?

Additionally, this bill seems to go beyond the bounds of the airport itself and include all businesses on all MAC airport property, which again brings up the aforementioned challenges. We believe governance issues at MSP reside with the MAC and not the legislature.

Our operators value their employees and know that they are on the forefront of ensuring MSP maintains its status as a world-class international airport. This legislation would change the dynamics of an industry that is trying to recover. We ask that you oppose SF 4708. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Angie Whitcomb
President & CEO
Hospitality Minnesota