

Dear Chair Hawj and the members of the Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee,

My name is Alex Maitheanas, and I am a resident and community organizer in Moorhead, MN. I urge all members of the committee to support SF 907, the bill that appropriates money for a cultural mall here in Moorhead.

Moorhead lies in Clay County, which is one of the fastest growing counties in the state. With our rapid growth, we are also seeing more immigrants arriving in our community. The Immigrant Development Center has been essential in making sure that immigrants can find work, acceptance, belonging, and a home here in Moorhead. When looking at US Census data, one might not initially think of Moorhead as being very diverse, as roughly 81% of the city is white. However, it is important to note that Middle Eastern people are forced to use "white" in the Census and do not have another option to pick. This information is incredibly relevant, as Moorhead has a large Kurdish population, and I personally know 4 Palestinians who live here. The facts remain that Moorhead is growing quickly, welcoming more and more immigrants each year, and that a cultural mall would likely be incredibly beneficial for the community, both immigrants and non-immigrants, at large.

I look forward to learning and hearing more about this project and the approval of appropriated funds for it. I urge the committee to pass SF 907.

Thank you,

Alex Maitheanas