



**Range Association of  
Municipalities and Schools**

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**March 10, 2025**

Senator Grant Hauschild  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3111  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: RAMS Letter of Support – SF 1197 - School district seasonal tax base replacement aid**

Senator Hauschild,

On behalf of the board of the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS), representing 27 cities, 28 townships, and 15 public school districts on the Iron Range of Northeastern Minnesota, I would like to indicate our support for your school district seasonal tax base replacement aid bill SF 1197.

There are 92 rural school districts without an operating levy, and all of them are in Greater Minnesota. Despite recent historic investments in education, districts across northeastern Minnesota are experiencing the compounding effect of historic underfunding. Disparities continue to widen between urban and rural schools. Our districts with lower tax base watch from the sidelines as Metro counterparts pass referendum after referendum to support schools. Recent operating levy referendum failures across northeastern Minnesota send a chilling effect through our regional communities. Many have given up hope of trying to generate the necessary funds for their districts. Districts are searching for a way to have a real conversation with voters. They need more tools to get to “yes”.

When school operating levy dollars on seasonal/recreational property are directed to the state business levy, not the school district, it widens the disparity. This bill fixes a problem by redirecting property tax dollars back to the school district from where it was generated. For these districts, especially those who currently have a levy, this legislation will mean immediate savings for taxpayers.

We are grateful that you, with bipartisan support from Range Delegation co-authors Senators Eichorn and Farnsworth (and others), are tackling this disparity between rural and urban schools by embracing this new solution. Please help direct our local dollars toward delivering on the promise of a uniform system of public instruction for Minnesota students. We urge your colleagues to support SF 1197.

Sincerely,

**Paul Peltier**

Executive Director

***Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS)** The organization represents more than 155,000 residents and 69 public sector units of government, including 27 cities, 28 townships, and 15 public school districts, in the 13,000 square mile Taconite Assistance Area (TAA) of northeast Minnesota. As an organization, RAMS has represented the interests of the Iron Range region for 85 years.*

