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Senator Lindsey Port
Chair, Committee on Housing and Homelessness Prevention
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3213
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Dedicated revenue for housing via a constitutional amendment for housing

Dear Senator Port and members of the Committee on Housing and Homelessness Prevention:

HOME Line submits this letter in support of the proposed Constitutional Amendment for Housing. Minnesota needs more affordable rental housing options. According to the Minnesota Housing Partnership's report "State of the State's Housing (2024)," there's a shortage of over 114,000 apartment units affordable and available to extremely low-income households. The Rental Opportunity Fund, included in the proposed constitutional amendment, will help fill this gap.

HOME Line is a statewide tenant advocacy organization that provides legal advice, education, advocacy, and organizing services to renters across the state through a free and confidential legal hotline. Renters are seeking to enforce their rights in record numbers and our hotline has seen a 50% increase in client volume compared to pre-pandemic levels. In just the last two years, our tenant hotline has averaged over 20,000 renter households advised per year — the most in our 32+ year history. And this isn't just a metro issue. Consistently over 20% of our calls are from tenants outside of the 7-county metro. Additionally, in recent years we've seen a 10% increase in service to individuals who speak Hmong, Somali, or Spanish.

The dire lack of deeply affordable rental housing in our state influences almost every rental housing topic we advise on. Some tenants are scared that their landlord may retaliate against them when they assert their rights. Many are concerned their lease

may not be renewed, placing them at the mercy of this unaffordable rental housing market. These concerns are more significant in Greater Minnesota where renters have fewer housing options available, and finding new housing in their home county or city can be nearly impossible. In these cases, more housing options don't just lead to greater affordability, but also helps tenants know there are other housing options available for them if they do need to move.

Again, HOME Line is proud to support a dedicated revenue source to address Minnesota's affordable housing needs. The campaign's name – Our Future Starts with Home — says it all.

Sincerely,
Michael Dahl
Public Policy Director