

February 13, 2025

To: Chair Port and members of the Senate Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee

From: Minnesota Tribal Collaborative

Chair Port and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative which represents ten tribes in Minnesota (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Lower Sioux, Mille Lacs, Prairie Island, Red Lake, Upper Sioux, and White Earth) who work together to prevent and end homelessness for American Indians. The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative is very supportive of SF 2214/HF 2276, appropriating funding for the Minnesota Homeless Study. The study has been a critical resource in understanding and addressing homelessness in Minnesota since 1991. In 2006, a companion survey, Homeless and Near Homeless on American Indian Reservations was conducted and provided data for tribal nations to prevent and end homelessness for their communities. This was the first time a study of this type was done in the United States and in partnership with tribal communities. This study not only resulted in new data but in promising practices of how to work collaboratively and respectfully with tribal nations. Since 2006 the data collected from the Homeless and Near Homeless on American Indian Reservations survey, has been used to prioritize needs, identify systemic issues, and improve programs and policies to address homelessness in our state. After the 2006 data was collected, Minnesota tribes used the data to develop the first in the U.S.A. tribal plans to prevent and end homelessness. From the work of developing plans the tribes formed the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative which is a unique collaboration of tribes working together to access resources, funding, and best practices to address homelessness on and off reservations.

The Minnesota Homeless Study and the companion Reservation Homeless Study are invaluable resources for anyone working to address homelessness and housing instability across the state. This includes state, tribal, county, city officials, and homeless service providers who are on the front lines supporting those individuals and communities most impacted by homelessness. The information collected also informs organizations that homeless individuals and families access for non-housing related services, such as healthcare, transportation services, and schools. An investment in this study represents incredible value, as the information is used to leverage resources and prioritize policies for Minnesotans impacted by homelessness and ensure that investments made are impactful long-term.

The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative, calls on the committee to pass SF 2214/HF 2276 to ensure that the state continues to benefit from the insights provided by Minnesota Homeless Study data.

Sincerely,

Christina Olsen, Coordinator Minnesota Tribal Collaborative