

**OPENING STATEMENT:**

Thank you for the opportunity to present information about the governor's office budget. I have brief background information I could provide and then I would be happy to answer questions you may have.

My name is Jaime Tincher. I am Chief of Staff to Governor Mark Dayton and Lt. Governor Tina Smith.

With me today is Paula Brown, our former Director of Operations. Paula retired in December 2014 after very ably serving in the role for the Ventura, Pawlenty and Dayton Administrations. Amanda Simpson, the Office's new Director of Operations had planned to be with me today, but is dealing with a family emergency. Amanda has been with the Governor's Office for 10 years as the Manager of the Governor's Residence.

**TESTIMONY:**

The Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor represents over 5.4 million Minnesotans and focuses on advancing the Governor's commitment to building a better Minnesota. Our office supports the work of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor which includes managing the day-to-day operations of state government; providing oversight for 24 cabinet-level departments and 59 non-cabinet-level executive branches; filling judicial vacancies; and appointing roughly 1,300 citizens to about 140 Boards and Commissions.

The Governor serves as chair of the State Executive Council, the State Board of Investment, the Land Exchange Board, and the Board of Pardons. He serves as Commander in Chief of the Minnesota National Guard and oversees emergency response for the state. And, as you know, he develops biennial budgets and policy recommendations for consideration in the legislature.

Every day, our office faces an array of challenges. From emergencies such as flooding, propane shortages, and the international threat of Ebola, no two days are alike in this office and we need to be able to quickly and effectively respond to the needs of the state at a moment's notice.

Our budget includes a request for a \$525,000 which is a 7.8% increase to our general fund appropriation. Like all agencies, to address compensation costs and changes in employer-paid contributions for insurance, FICA, retirement and other factors we are requesting a 1.8% increase for fiscal year 2016 and 2017. That increase for 2016 is based on our 2015 operating budget, and the same for

2017. Those amounts are \$48,000 and \$97,000. In the last year, I have added staff in the areas of legal services, emergency preparedness and constituent work. The additional \$379,000 would allow our office to maintain those staff levels through the next biennial budget.

The vast majority of the operating expenses in our budget are for staff. We currently have 46 employees. There was a time during the Carlson administration and early in the Ventura administration when the office had a staff complement as high as 55 full time employees. In recent years, these numbers have been in the 35-42 range. Just for a point of comparison, the Pawlenty Administration averaged about 44 full time employees.

We are requesting a budget that allows us to maintain our current staffing. I understand the change item lists 4.6 FTEs. To be clear, the goal with this request is not to increase our current staffing, but to maintain it.

I believe it is important to have a team of high performing, flexible people who are skilled at responding quickly to a crisis while still maintaining a level of service to our constituents that is responsive and timely. This budget will allow our office to continue to address the needs of our constituents, agencies and the Legislature, even in times that we need to address emergency and other issues that arise quickly and change frequently.

Thank you for considering our request and I'm happy to answer questions you may have.