

General Timeline of the 2011 Minnesota Government Shutdown

Introduction

This timeline serves as a broad outline of the events between the end of the regular session and leading up to the end of the fiscal year, during the shutdown, and through the special session.

This timeline *does not* give a full sense of the concern voiced in the media before and during the shutdown about the disruption to service in a variety of areas, including State Patrol services, construction projects, colleges and universities, parks, state licensing, and schools.

Links are included to several court documents and other shutdown-related documents – but *not all*. See the Library's [2011 Shutdown Document Archive](#) for an expanded list and the ability to search the documents by keyword. The Library also compiled a document of [2011 notices](#) posted on state agency websites describing the disruption of their services.

May 23, 2011

The 2011 regular session of the Legislature ended with only one of the nine major appropriations bills passed into law, the [Omnibus Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Bill](#) (*Minnesota Laws 2011*, Chapter 14).

May 24

Governor Mark Dayton vetoed the nine remaining budget and tax bills. See the vetoes database to locate the [bills vetoed in 2011](#).

June 2

The [Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy](#) met to begin discussion on their role and powers available to the Commission. The commissioners of the Minnesota Department of Revenue, Myron Frans, and Minnesota Management and Budget, Jim Showalter, were [invited to the meeting](#) and did not attend.

June 3

A joint GOP House and Senate [schedule of meetings](#) for budget negotiations was proposed to Governor Mark Dayton.

June 4

The BeReady Minnesota website was launched with information for state employees and agencies about a possible shutdown.

June 6

Senator Amy Koch and Representative Kurt Zellers outlined a Republican [budget offer in a letter](#) to Governor Mark Dayton.

June 7

A second meeting of the [Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy](#) was held; Commissioners Myron Franz and Jim Schowalter testified for nearly two hours.

June 9

The [Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy](#) met and continued their general budget discussion.

June 10

[Layoff notices](#) were sent to 36,000 state employees. Notices were sent to state employee union members by the dates specified in their union contracts.

June 13

Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson filed a [Petition](#) (case no. 62-CV-11-5203) with Ramsey County District Court, to preserve the operation and funding of the core functions of state government if a budget was not enacted for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011. The Order would be valid until July 30, 2011, or a budget was enacted, or until further order from the Court. See also the [Petitioner's Memorandum in support for motion for relief](#) and the [Motion for Order to Show Cause](#).

More than 572,000 letters were sent from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to people receiving services, warning them that their health care and other benefits could discontinue on July 1.

June 15

Governor Mark Dayton issued the [Response of the Governor to the Petition of the Attorney General](#) (case no. 62-CV-11-5203). In the Order he asked the Court to order that he and legislative leaders engage in mediation to resolve differences before a July 1 shutdown.

Governor Dayton submitted two documents to the Court: [Recommended Priority One and Priority Two Critical Services](#) and [Recommended Statewide Objectives: 2011 Potential Minnesota Shutdown](#). The documents were prepared by the Statewide Contingency Response Team headed by the Commissioner Jim Schowalter of Minnesota Management and Budget. The Recommended Priority One and Priority Two Critical Services document states, "Only minimal levels of staff and operating expenses that are necessary to continue, secure, or support these operations are requested to continue in the event of a government shutdown. All others are recommended to close."

June 16

Senator Amy Koch and Representative Kurt Zellers delivered a [budget offer](#) to Governor Mark Dayton.

June 20

Senators Warren Limmer, Scott J. Newman, and Sean R. Nienow, Roger C. Chamberlain filed a [petition for writ of quo warranto](#) with the Minnesota Supreme Court (case no. A11-1107) challenging the authority of the Ramsey County District Court to order any expenditures from the state treasury in the absence of a legislative appropriation. A similar lawsuit was [filed in 2005](#) (case no. C9-05-9413). Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson responded with a [legal memorandum](#) arguing that the Petition for writ of quo warranto should be dismissed. The same legislators filed a [document](#) (case no. 62-CV-5203) requesting the Second Judicial District Court to require Governor Mark Dayton call a special session.

June 21

Governor Mark Dayton [expanded](#) his list of essential services to include payments for several Minnesota Department of Human Services programs, including Medicaid and General Assistance.

June 22

Governor Mark Dayton [joined](#) (case no. A11-1107) the Attorney General's petition to dismiss the Petition for writ of quo warranto.

The Minnesota Supreme Court [dismissed](#) the petition for writ of quo warranto without prejudice (case no. A11-1107).

June 24

Over the course of June 24 and 25 party leaders and Governor Dayton met to work on negotiations. Commissioner Jim Schowalter was also in attendance at these meetings.

Governor Dayton's office released a series of letters and offer sheets exchanged by the Governor's office and Republican legislative leadership.

June 27

Minnesota's Second District Court Judge Kathleen Gearin issued an [Order](#) (case no. 62-CV-5203) denying the request to require mediation between the legislature and the executive branch.

June 29

The Minnesota Second District Court (District Court) issued an [Order](#) (case no. 62-CV-5203) specifying which executive services would continue and directed that they be funded by the state treasury. The District Court ruled that the executive branch was authorized to spend money only for "critical core functions of government."

The District Court decided that most of the "critical services" identified in the Governor's list of services were critical core functions. The District Court appointed retired Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz as a Special Master to hear and make recommendations to the District Court "regarding any issue raised by Petitioner or others relating to the application of this Order," including petitions for

the continuation of additional services. Judge Blatz heard petitions from non-profits, businesses, trade associations, government agencies, and individuals who were affected by the shutdown of state government.

July 1

The state government shutdown began at 12:01 a.m. Governor Mark Dayton [announced the shutdown](#), beginning, “I deeply regret that the last week of intense negotiations between the Republican legislative leaders and Senator Bakk, Representative Thissen, and myself have failed to bridge the divide between us.”

July 6

Governor Mark Dayton relayed a budget offer in a [letter to Republican leaders](#).

July 8

Minnesota Senators Warren Limmer, Scott J. Newman, Sean R. Nienow, and Roger C. Chamberlain, along with Minnesota Representatives Glenn H. Gruenhagen and Ernest G. Leidiger filed a [petition for writ of quo warranto](#) (case no. A11-1222) in the Minnesota Supreme Court, arguing that the Minnesota Constitution forbids any state spending unless it is authorized by the Minnesota Legislature.

July 11

Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lori Gildea [ordered](#) a hearing regarding the Petition for a writ of quo warranto (case no. A11-1222). The hearing was scheduled for July 27.

July 14

Governor Mark Dayton hand-delivered an offer letter to Republican leaders. After three hours of negotiation, Governor Dayton and the Republican leaders announced a framework for resolving the budget impasse.

July 18

Governor Mark Dayton [responded to the Petition for writ of quo warranto](#) lawsuit brought by legislators, arguing that it should be denied.

July 19

Governor Mark Dayton issued a [proclamation](#) calling the legislature into special session at 3 p.m. the same day.

The Minnesota State Capitol and State Office Building were [reopened to the public](#).

July 20

Governor Mark Dayton signed twelve [2011 1st Special Session bills](#) into law ending the 2011 government shutdown.

- [Judiciary and public safety](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 1
- [Environment, energy and commerce](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 2
- [Transportation](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 3
- [Jobs and economic growth](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 4
- [Higher education](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 5
- [Legacy](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 6
- [Taxes](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 7
- [Pensions](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 8
- [Health and human services](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 9
- [State government, innovations and veterans](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 10
- [Education](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 11
- [Bonding](#), *Minnesota Laws 2011 First Special Session*, Chapter 12

July 22

Minnesota Second District Court Judge Kathleen Gearin signed the [Order](#) stating the original shutdown order of June 29 was no longer in effect, and that the Court would take no actions on a number of remaining petitions for funding, as they had become moot.