

Dear Governor Walz and Legislative Leaders:

As associations representing the state's local partners – its school districts, counties, cities, and townships, encompassing all citizens of our state -- we are aware of the significant challenges and needs local leaders face amid an uncertain economy and the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

Since the legislative session adjournment on May 23rd, we are repeatedly asked by our members and the citizens we represent whether there will be a special session. This is not a casual ask of curiosity, but a plea and passion for us, as their representatives, to press forward to encourage your action and hold a special session.

During the 2022 legislative session, school, county, city, and township leaders articulated needs for state support, some of which received consideration in bills that were not finalized before the conclusion of the session. State resources play a critical role in the provision of many local services. Challenges faced by your peers – our locally elected officials – are at a high point, and many issues need attention now and should not wait until 2023.

Minnesota is proud of the historical partnership between the state and local governments. A strong partnership between state and local governments has long been imperative to ensuring local officials have the resources to address statutorily directed services that are provided locally. Local services are essential to our quality of life and vitally important to ensure the continued health, safety, welfare, and education, for all Minnesotans. Our citizens rely on us to provide services and we rely on you for the ability to provide the same. When a breakdown occurs – at any point – issues surface and frustrations can arise.

We appreciate the consideration given to local issues and needs during the session. We know you all understand the significant issues local governments are currently experiencing. As partners, we want to work with you to inform and educate you on the impacts and issues of our priorities and why a special session is so important.

We can provide many examples of pressing local needs. Generally, they include labor shortages that consequentially affect public services and escalating costs to provide police and fire services, social services, and the education of Minnesota's students. Local leaders are also working to improve deteriorating infrastructure, but they are doing so without appropriate state investments. There are also urgent needs for funding the state's social service and mental health support services to address substantial challenges being experienced by families and communities. Schools are confronting widespread challenges for students that will only compound without necessary resources.

Cities, counties, and schools also are faced with issuing local regulations as a result of the new THC law. Prompt establishment of a state framework and parameters for regulation, established by lawmakers in partnership with local governments, is needed now. Not

addressing a framework for regulation until next year is a recipe for a patchwork quilt of local laws, potentially and likely inconsistent from one city, county, and school district to another.

We are therefore writing to respectfully, yet strongly, encourage the prompt convening of a special session to finalize supplemental budget and tax bills, the development of a capital investment bill and other critical unfinished business including state matching funds for the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and a framework for the regulation of cannabinoid products. We call upon you to continue engaging with us, your local government partners, to finalize legislation that will serve the entire state.

The state's historically large budget surplus provides an unprecedented opportunity for Minnesota to address the state's immediate and critical needs. We ask you to use this opportunity and to return to the work at hand. Minnesota's local governments, and the state's residents, business, families, and students are depending on you.

Now is the time for action: we stand ready to work with you and appreciate your attention to our request. Our constituents are your constituents, let's work together in the next few weeks to complete the business started months ago and, in the end, benefit all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,