

April 29, 2024

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for including \$32 million in General Obligation bonds for publicly-owned housing preservation in the DE amendment to HF5220, the House's 2024 Bonding Bill. We appreciate your continued strong commitment to this effort. As many of you know, the federal government has mostly backed away from its responsibility to preserve the nation's public housing stock. Minnesota is unique in that we have decided to do what we can to fill the void. I am extremely proud of this work and want to express my gratitude to the legislature for being such a strong partner in it.

Public housing serves over 35,000 households in all 87 counties, two-thirds of which have annual incomes below \$15,000. This includes about 12,000 children, along with many senior households, and people with disabilities. Simply put, these are some of the state's most poor and most vulnerable residents. In many communities public housing provides the only safe, affordable option to households earning the least.

About 90% of public housing units are over 40+ years old and we no longer build new publicly-owned units. These funds would be prioritized for life safety projects, as well as energy efficiency. This can include fire suppression systems, accessibility improvements, window and roof replacement, HVAC modernization, and elevator repair or replacement.

An additional \$32 million would allow the agency and our local housing and redevelopment organization partners to impact about 1,600 publicly-owned housing units throughout the state. From 2012-2020, Minnesota Housing invested \$63.5 million in 115 projects, which impacted over 8,500 units. Two-thirds of funds have gone into Greater Minnesota. Our most recent Request for Proposal for \$41 million closed in early March. We received early intent-to-apply submissions totaling almost \$100 million.

I again want to commend your continued dedication to the preservation Minnesota's publicly-owned housing, and the people it serves. I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Leimaile Ho
Commissioner