



Minnesota Conservation Officers Association

President – Joseph Stattelman
Vice President – Caleb Silgjord

Secretary – Shane Osborne
Treasurer – Joel Heyn

The Honorable Rep. Ginny Klevorn
Chair, State and Local Government Finance and Policy
381 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Klevorn and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Conservation Officers Association and am asking for your support for HF1600. As you are aware, hiring and retention in law enforcement has hit a critical inflection point. For state employed peace officers, including MN Conservation Officers, we have seen a drastic downward trend in prospective candidates. This is reflective in the data from our past hiring processes. Please reference the attached Conservation Officer hiring data provided.

As a group, the MLEA has strived to secure the most competitive wages for the sake of both current and future members, along with the hope of providing better hiring and retention tools for our respective agencies. Unfortunately, MMB's archaic negotiation tactic of using pattern bargaining has continually degraded the ability for state law enforcement agencies to stay competitive in a hiring market that has seen quality candidates all but dissipate.

The legislature took unprecedented actions to address these issues in recent sessions and included an OLA study to provide data to MMB to address this issue. It is our hope that by passing HF1600, MMB will fully understand the legislature's intent accompanied with the OLA data when entering future negotiations with MLEA. We are hopeful that in doing so we can continue to attract and retain the highest quality candidates for state law enforcement positions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Caleb Silgjord
Vice President -Minnesota Conservation Officers Association