

Good afternoon members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy committee.

My name is Lars Leafblad and I'm a resident of Shoreview, small business co-owner and lifelong fan of Minnesota's state gemstone, Lake Superior Agate, which was given its official designation (after much debate) by your legislative predecessors in 1969.

Like many Minnesotans, my first memories of hunting for agates were made on the beaches of Lake Superior with my late grandparents, Jack and Sally Birk, who made Duluth their home after US Steel brought them to town in 1971.

I've continued the tradition of agate hunting with my four kids, now ages 13 to 21, via trips to Grand Marais, the banks of the Mississippi River and all along the North Shore.

I am here today in support of House File number 3699, a bill to amend existing legislation directing "The commissioner of natural resources must hold a license plate design contest to design a new state park license plate available under Minnesota Statute section [168.1295.subdivision 1](#)"

This amendment, introduced by Rep. Gottfried and Rep. Falconer, will clarify that "the license plate design must celebrate the North Shore and the Lake Superior Agate".

Thank you Rep. Gottfried and Rep. Falconer for your leadership. Why vote yes?

150,000+ Minnesotans are members of Lake Superior Agate Facebook groups.

Thousands of Minnesotans gather every summer for the "Super Bowl" of our state gemstone; "Moose Lake Agate Days" in Moose Lake.

Tens of thousands of visitors stop annually at the Moose Lake Agate and Geological Interpretative Center (aka MAGIC) right off of Hwy 35W in Moose Lake State Park. This center was opened in 2004 thanks to the work of Phil Gotsch and the Minnesota Mineral Club.

By voting yes on this legislation, you're voting to support a geological catalyst for cross-generational memory-making and community building across our state.

In these times, we need these "catalysts of joy" more than ever and this amendment to celebrate our North Shore and state gemstone via a public license plate design contest does just that.

Thank you for your consideration and for your public service.

Additional information is available at [AgatePlate.com](#) Onwards and upwards Minnesota!

Submitted by Lars Leafblad, 4765 Chandler Road, Shoreview, MN 55126.