

April 5, 2022

The Honorable Leon Lillie
Chair, Legacy Finance Committee
365 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Lillie,

We are writing to express our strong support for the DE-5 amendment to House File 3438, which would allocate additional Parks and Trails Legacy funding in fiscal year 2023 to benefit regional and state parks throughout the State of Minnesota.

The DE-5 amendment would provide an additional \$2,594,000 in Parks and Trails Legacy funding to the Metropolitan Council to distribute to the 10 Metropolitan Regional Parks implementing agencies. The Metropolitan Regional Parks System includes 54,000 acres of land, 56 regional parks and park reserves, and more than 400 miles of interconnected trails. The system hosted more than 63 million visits in 2019, and during the pandemic, the importance of the system to residents and visitors to the Twin Cities region has only grown. People rely on it as a safe place to gather with family and friends outdoors and discover nature. Due to the popularity of the system, our parks are in danger of being "loved to death," and funding to maintain and improve the system's infrastructure is greatly needed.

The increase in Parks and Trails Legacy funding appropriated in the DE-5 amendment will help fund these critical infrastructure needs faced by the Metropolitan Regional Parks System. This funding will allow us to replace outdated and worn park facilities, increase the accessibility of existing facilities, and develop new facilities to better serve our ever-expanding user base. We urge adoption of the DE-5 amendment to HF 3438, and we thank you for your continued support of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System.

Sincerely,

Jeff Perry
Parks Director
Anoka County

Mark McCabe
Director of Parks and Recreation
Ramsey County

Ann Kattreh
Parks and Recreation Director
City of Bloomington

Tom Russell
Interim Parks and Recreation Director
City of Saint Paul

Martin Walsh
Parks and Recreation Director
Carver County

Patricia Freeman
General Manager of Parks and Trails
Scott County

Niki Geisler
Director of Parks
Dakota County

Boe Carlson
Superintendent
Three Rivers Park District

Al Bangoura
Superintendent
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Sandy Breuer
Parks Director
Washington County