

February 3, 2021

Re: Support for HF 42 and HF 21

Dear Chair Gomez and Members of the Preventing Homelessness Division,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HF 42 and HF 21. Housing instability and burdensome housing costs were already at a peak before COVID-19, and the presence of the pandemic and continued economic instability further exacerbates the issue. We have experienced significant levels of unsheltered homelessness in our community since the start of the pandemic.

The City of Minneapolis has spent substantial staff time and resources to provide hygiene support at encampments, expand street outreach capacity and invest in new shelters to enhance our overall homeless response system. State emergency services grants have supported the City's efforts to provide needed hygiene support at encampments. The funding for emergency services grants in HF 42 would enable cities like Minneapolis to continue to address needs at encampments.

The City has joined county, state, philanthropy and non-profit partners to invest a total of \$55 million to expand emergency shelter, low-barrier housing and protective housing for people experiencing homelessness, as well as enhance existing shelters and expand support services, rapid rehousing, and street outreach. The City's portion of this investment is \$13,400,000. These partnerships, in combination with a new City emergency shelter ordinance adopted in December, and extensive technical assistance provided by City staff, resulted in four new emergency shelters opening in late 2020, and another 36-bed facility starting construction.

HF 21 provides \$25 million for emergency shelters. This funding is critical to supporting projects like those we have developed in Minneapolis. Two of our long-standing shelter providers, Simpson Housing and St. Stephen's Human Services, are both in need of capital for long-term shelter improvements. These projects, which also include permanent supportive housing, have already received commitments in funding from the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. State investments in shelter capital will ensure that these important projects can move forward to meet the needs of our unhoused neighbors.

The City of Minneapolis stands ready to continue partnering with the county, state and neighboring jurisdictions to improve our homelessness response system, invest in permanent housing and address the needs of those experiencing homelessness. We have made significant local commitments to responding to homelessness since the start of the pandemic, but we know that it is something we cannot address adequately without a coordinated approach and investments from all levels of government.

We are grateful for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jacob Frey



Council President Lisa Bender