

April 25, 2022

Representative Rena Moran
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
449 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: H.F. 4177 Supplemental Labor and Industry Finance and Policy Bill

Dear Representative Moran,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.F. 4177, the Labor and Industry Omnibus bill. I appreciate inclusion of the Governor's supplemental budget and policy recommendations for the department, as they support our economic recovery, improve safety and health, and enable the agency to better meet the needs of the Minnesotans we serve.

The agency supports the following key department priorities in the bill:

- **Keeping Minnesota OSHA penalties in line with federal OSHA** for employers that fail to provide safe and healthy workplaces for their workers to ensure continued federal funding and encourage employers to take workplace safety and health violations more seriously;
- **Increasing funding for registered apprenticeship and the LEAP grant** to establish a separate Apprenticeship Division within DLI and increase the participation of women, people of color, and Indigenous people in registered apprenticeship programs;
- **Growing the Youth Skills Training Program (YST)** to support additional YST partnerships to offer safe, healthy and meaningful work experience to 16- and 17-year-old student learners;
- **Additional funding for prevailing wage enforcement** to ensure that persons working on public works are compensated according to the real value of the services they perform;
- **Strengthening fair labor standards for agricultural and food processing workers** to expand protections and build awareness of workplace rights;
- **Better protecting combatant safety and health** through regulatory changes to the Office of Combative Sports;
- **Improving energy efficiency in commercial and large multi-family buildings** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change;

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- **Providing the department regulatory oversight of assisted living facilities** and assisted living with dementia care facilities to ensure these facilities designed for the elderly and vulnerable adults meet minimum safety standards;
- **Providing a two-year license fee holiday** to provide economic relief to 87,000 building and construction trades professional licensees;
- **Correcting errors** for construction fee reductions for building permit and plan review services and adding effective dates for the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council recommendations that became law earlier this session.

I also appreciate inclusion of the proposal to require petroleum refinery contractors to participate in registered apprenticeship for work in the construction and maintenance of petroleum refineries, as it will ensure workers have access to the skills and training needed to perform the job safely.

Additional funding for logger safety grants will be welcomed by the industry. Funding would enable employers to purchase or maintain recommended safety equipment and invest in training to reduce the risk of injury to their employees. The veterans liaison coordinator position within registered apprenticeship would enable the agency to better support veterans in the trades and increase veteran participation in registered apprenticeship in industries in and beyond construction.

Regarding other provisions in the bill, the department appreciates the work to engage stakeholders on the window cleaning anchor and elevator contractor provisions to achieve consensus. The department commits to continuing to work to find resolution on these issues and looks forward to continued discussion on the proposal to exempt certain load management devices from inspections. The agricultural worker wellness provisions creating an ombudsperson and an Agricultural Worker Wellness Committee were originally DEED provisions and are more appropriately housed within that agency. We look forward to working on this proposal.

In conclusion, the provisions in the Labor and Industry Omnibus bill prioritize workers and will enable the department to meet the needs of our stakeholders. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Roslyn C. Robertson
Commissioner

cc: Representative Pat Garofalo, Republican Lead, Ways and Means Committee
Representative Rob Ecklund, Chair, Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Joe McDonald, Co-Republican Lead, Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Bob Dettmer, Co-Republican Lead, Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee