



March 20, 2023

The Honorable Fue Lee, Chair  
House Capital Investment Committee  
485 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Dean Urdahl, Ranking Minority Leader  
House Capital Investment Committee  
279 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Lee, Ranking Minority Leader Urdahl, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Greater Mankato Growth, the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization representing more than 900 members in the Greater Mankato region, I write in support of the \$10,000,000 bonding request for the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota and nine other children's museums throughout Minnesota (HF2185/SF2348). Fully funding these projects would represent a critical investment in 10 regional museums that will help ensure every corner of our state has the amenities needed to support early childhood development and promote regional livability and economic development.

The mission of Greater Mankato Growth (GMG) is to support and promote the economic growth and vitality of our members and the regional marketplace. As a growing, dynamic Greater Minnesota metro hub, this project represents a critical component of our economic vitality which is to foster the learning and development of children. The Mankato-North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area has a labor shed of nearly 300,000 people and has grown by more than 21% since 2000. This project is a key priority for our members and will support our regional livability and promote economic growth.

Greater Mankato Growth is a proud partner in economic development as part of the Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA) which includes five cities along with Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties. A key component of our work is talent attraction and regional livability. The Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota in Mankato represents a key asset to help foster early childhood development, but also as a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity. In a modern 21st century economy families can live anywhere, but they demand amenities and programs that will enrich the lives of their children like those offered in the children's museums throughout greater Minnesota.

We urge you to fully fund HF2185/SF2348 for children's museums across the state of Minnesota including \$10,000,000 for the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota in Mankato.

Respectfully,

Andy Wilke

Director of Business Development and Public Affairs

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