

March 5, 2021

Chair Noor and Members of the House Workforce and Business Development Committee:

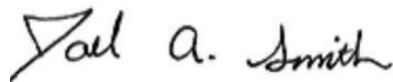
On behalf of the 28,000 members and family members of Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I write today urging your support of HF 728 (Lee), authorizing appropriation bonds to repair, rebuild, and revitalize Minneapolis and Saint Paul businesses and neighborhoods, which saw decades of BIPOC and immigrant community investments destroyed in a single week of unrest last year.

We are a union founded by immigrants and our strength comes from a diverse and multiracial membership, and over 100 years of fighting for systemic transformation and racial equality. In the Twin Cities metropolitan area alone, we represent more than 1,000 self-identified people of color and 600 women who are skilled and trained journey and apprentice laborers.

In Minnesota, we show up for one another when disaster strikes any community – be it flooding in Albert Lea, Duluth or St. Peter, or tornado devastation in North Minneapolis, Rogers or Wadena. Our leaders and government have a duty to help Minnesotans rebuild their lives and strengthen our communities.

HF 728 can also be an essential tool to advance equity and economic opportunity for BIPOC and new Americans who seek employment opportunities in the construction trades. Thousands of laborers and our fellow trades members of color have launched life-long, family-supporting careers with the support of tuition-free, earn-while-you-learn, registered union apprenticeships. Please join us to support a multi-path effort to make critical state investments that increase the cultural, social and economic vitality of our entire state. I again urge your support for HF 728 as amended and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Joel Smith
President and Business Manager
LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota