



Forgivable Loan Program for Remote Recreational Businesses, HF 2826

March 24, 2023

Dear Chair Hassan and Members of the House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee:

Thank you Chair Hassan and members of the committee for considering HF 2826 (Grossell) to help small businesses in the NW Angle who suffered extreme setbacks due to the pandemic.

It has been my privilege for last 23 years to represent Lake of the Woods County. The NW Angle is the most northern county in MN and the most northern part of the contiguous United States. The unique geography of the NW Angle has unique challenges:

- The NW Angle is surrounded by 3 sides of Canada and to the south Lake of the Woods with over 30 miles of open water.
- The NW Angle dealt with COVID related border closures for 1-full year; when closures eased, visitors faced very restrictive vaccination mandates at the border, making it very difficult to access the area.
- The NW Angle is really 100% dependent on tourism, so we are asking for an extension to the remote recreational business forgivable loan program.

Lake of the Woods County received \$5 million dollars 2-years ago, \$2.1 million was returned to the general fund so we seek the remaining \$2.1 million to help the approximately 30 business suffering through the pandemic.

On behalf of the NW Angle and our small businesses struggling to survive, I thank you for your consideration.

Ed Arnesen
Commissioner
Lake of the Woods County