



Minnesota Department of Human Services
Elmer L. Andersen Building
Commissioner Jodi Harpstead
Post Office Box 64998
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0998

April 30, 2024

Dear Members of the House Capital Investment Committee:

Thank you for all of your efforts so far this session to craft a package of investments to support the infrastructure of our state.

We are particularly grateful that this year's proposed capital investment package builds on the Governor's recommendation for Early Childhood Facilities Grants by investing \$10 million in the program. This investment will help local entities, Tribal Nations, nonprofits, and family child care providers construct new early childhood facilities or renovate aging, substandard facilities. This funding is a catalyst for collaboration between cities, counties, and school districts to improve early childhood facilities and promote better outcomes for young children.

We know that there is significant need to expand child care facility capacity across Minnesota. With this funding, newly constructed or renovated facilities will increase access to child care and promote developmental outcomes for children, particularly those who are at the highest risk of being unprepared for kindergarten. This investment aligns with the Governor's One Minnesota Plan, which prioritizes equitable outcomes for children and families and increases access to affordable, quality child care for Minnesota families.

In addition, we appreciate that this year's capital investment package also includes the \$12.266 million for asset preservation that was recommended in the Governor's bill. This will greatly assist the department in addressing the more than \$185 million in deferred maintenance.

As you continue work on the capital investment package for this year, we would respectfully ask that you consider including our third priority project, replacement of the **St. Peter water and sewer systems** for \$13 million.

The majority of the sewer and water systems on the St. Peter campus are over 75 years old and have far exceeded their useful life. Without replacement, the probability of infrastructure failing is very high and increases with each passing year. This project directly affects the health and safety of over 1,100 people on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

During last year's session, the Legislature appropriated \$1.05 million for the project design. We anticipate project design to be complete this summer, and we hope to see the funding for the St. Peter project included in a final bill.

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Thank you again for your work to fund so many important priorities. We are grateful for the opportunity to share this input, and we look forward to continuing the conversation about these important projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jodi Harpstead". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jodi Harpstead
Commissioner