

May 2, 2023

Dear Representative Hassan, Senator Champion, and members of the Jobs and Economic Development Conference Committee:

As leaders from across Greater Minnesota, we write today to highlight the critical role that the Center for Rural Policy and Development (CRPD) plays in the economic vitality of Greater Minnesota, and to ask the committee to approve the CRPD's \$778,000 funding level contained in the House bill. In addition, we request that the committee include its funding on an ongoing basis.

In recent years, the CRPD has authored dozens of studies that have helped quantify the problems that all of us have seen throughout our region—from the shortage of more than 40,000 child care slots to the failure that exists in our housing market. These reports, as well as others, have helped our local government, business, and foundation leaders to develop and execute plans to address the concerns, with the ultimate goal of stimulating economic growth—and building prosperity—in our communities.

The state has been a partner to the CRPD since its inception. In fact, it was created in 1998 in state statute, and formally organized following the passage of the legislation. Over the years, the state has always been a financial partner. While the state appropriation is only a part of the CRPD's budget, as a small organization with a staff of three, any budget reduction has significant impacts on staffing and the work of the organization. A budget reduction would negatively impact the economic reality of the region we serve.

Given that the CRPD has been a partner of the state for twenty-five years, and given that the CRPD was established in and remains a part of our state statutes, we believe it is incumbent upon the legislature to provide financial support as a part of the state's ongoing budget.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Karen White  
President/CEO  
Northwest Minnesota Foundation

Tony Sertich  
President/CEO  
Northland Foundation

Anna Wasescha  
President  
West Central Initiative

Matt Varilek  
President  
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Scott Marquardt  
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Southwest Initiative Foundation

Tim Penny  
President/CEO  
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

Bradley Peterson  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

Scott McMahon  
Executive Director  
Greater Minnesota Partnership