

May 13, 2025

TO: Senator Founj Hawj, Chair, Senate Environment and Legacy Committee  
Representative Joe McDonald, Co-chair, House Legacy Committee  
Representative Samantha Vang, Co-chair, House Legacy Committee  
Members of the Legacy Finance Conference Committee

FROM:   
Kent Whitworth, Director and CEO, Minnesota Historical Society

RE: 2025 Legacy Finance Bill

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Thank you for your continued support for Minnesota history in the 2025 Legacy Finance bill. On behalf of the Minnesota history community, we appreciate your work to fulfill the language of the Minnesota Constitution which, in part, requires Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds to be used "to preserve Minnesota's history."

As you begin deliberations in the Legacy conference committee, we respectfully request your consideration of several issues in the bill:

**Overall Legacy Amendment funding levels for history** - Constitutional language creating the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF) clearly states that funds are to be used for "arts, arts access, arts education and *to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage.*" With this clearly stated language, we urge you to provide strong funding levels for history programs, including grants and statewide history educational programs that fulfill this requirement. We respectfully request that funding levels for history programs coordinated through MNHS are at **25%, or greater, of the ACHF.**

**Administrative costs** - Responsibly administering grant programs takes resources. The Minnesota Historical Society has successfully administered 3,500 grants over the life of the Legacy Amendment. MNHS staff conscientiously review grant applications, coordinate the Historic Resources Advisory Committee, the volunteer committee that makes recommendations on grants, and, post-award, ensure proper use of these public funds. We request that

administrative funding levels be set in accordance with 16B.98, Subdivision 14, which permits administrative fees for competitive grant programs to be up to ten percent. At a time when Minnesotans are rightfully focused on wise use of public dollars, it is important to provide sufficient resources to properly administer these important financial resources.

**Competitive Grants Programs** - Since the start of Arts and Cultural Heritage Funding, MNHS has administered a grants program for history projects. We have found that competitive grant processes provide good solid reviews of project applications and provide funding to quality projects that are ready to move forward. We appreciate the move to focusing on competitive grant programs.

The House and Senate bills each create additional grants programs that appear to be for similar purposes as existing grants programs for history. In addition, language in the bills directs MNHS and other granting organizations to “give priority consideration to...*[specific named projects]*.” It is unclear what “priority consideration” means. Do granting organizations have any latitude in determining grant recipients or does this language require that a grant be given to the named organization?

We respectfully request that projects named in these sections of the bills be encouraged to apply for competitive grant programs. In the cases where project types may not be eligible for a history grant, such as murals, statues and other projects, other agencies’ grants programs may be more appropriate.

**Construction projects** - both bills prohibit funds from being used for construction projects, and provide an exception for preservation of historic structures. We appreciate this exemption since these projects fall clearly in the intent of the Constitutional language “to preserve Minnesota’s history.” Should there be any additional changes to this section, we would appreciate being part of this conversation to ensure that preservation of Minnesota’s history, through the built environment, is permitted to continue.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and for your continued strong support for history.

## Mike Molzahn

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**From:** Frawley, John (MNZOO) <john.frawley@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 16, 2025 4:23 PM  
**To:** sen.susan.pha@senate.mn; sen.zaynab.mohamed@senate.mn;  
sen.eric.pratt@mnsenate.gov; Sen. Fount Hawj; sen.jennifer.mcewen@senate.mn; Joe McDonald; Samakab Hussein; Samantha Vang; Roger Skraba;  
panhia.vang@mnsenate.gov; Ben Pettee; august.weinreich@mnsenate.gov;  
maikao.vue@mnsenate.gov; chelsea.barks@mnsenate.gov; Karina Nelson; Morgan Durfee; Grace Johnson; Anne Larson; kara.josephson@mnsenate.gov; Mike Molzahn; Amy Zipko; Karina Nelson; Grace Johnson  
**Cc:** Wallace, Kayla (She/Her/Hers) (MNZOO); Katy Sen; Bailey A. Strand; Craig Sondag; Elena M. Cherry  
**Subject:** Minnesota Zoo

Dear Legacy Conferees & Staff,

Thank you for your service and leadership during this legislative session. We know it's been a challenging year, and we deeply appreciate your dedication to preserving Minnesota's cultural and natural heritage through investments in arts, access, and education.

**The Minnesota Zoo plays a vital educational role in connecting Minnesotans to animals and the natural world.** Our Legacy-funded programs make this work possible, allowing us to reach communities across the state and provide educational and inclusive experiences for all:

- Engage 103,000 students and chaperones annually across 1,000+ schools
- Provide significantly discounted or free admission to students on school field trips
- Welcome over 120,000 "Free to Explore" guests each year from all 87 counties
- Operate the nation's largest Zoo Camp

However, the current House proposal falls nearly 50% short of what the Zoo received in FY 24-25 and represents the first time since the inception of the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund that the Zoo would receive less than the prior biennium.

**The House position would cause the Zoo to lose the ability to supplement programs such as:**

- Onsite animal encounters and experiences
- Offsite Zoomobile: delivering animal encounters to nursing homes and hospitals
- Expanded hours for the Family Farm exhibit
- Maintaining our award-winning education programs
- Work that we do to welcome people of all abilities and backgrounds to the Zoo
- Special exhibits and experiences that help us attract new audiences
  - School bus scholarships
  - Educational bird demonstration shows
  - Interactive dinosaur exhibit
  - Seasonal llama encounters

- Treetop Trail programming
- Wild Nights concerts & adult-only events

**These high-value programs help us reach new audiences and create meaningful encounters between Minnesotans the natural world**—which are vital to the Zoo’s mission and business model. The combined impact of the House’s proposed Legacy and General Fund appropriations put the Zoo on an unsustainable financial course.

**To sustain these vital programs and continue providing equitable, educational experiences to all Minnesotans, we respectfully request a biennial appropriation of at least \$4 million—the same level of support we received in the prior biennium.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please reach out if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Respectfully,

John

**John Frawley** | Zoo Director & Zoo Foundation President | [John.Frawley@state.mn.us](mailto:John.Frawley@state.mn.us)  
o: 952.431.9299 | f: 952.431.9300 | [MNZOO.ORG](http://MNZOO.ORG)  
13000 Zoo Boulevard Apple Valley MN 55124



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**District 2** – Sara Thompson, Itasca County  
**District 3** – Crystal Johnson, City of Granite Falls  
**District 4** – Josh Baas, City of Elk River  
**District 5** – Jon Jerabek, McLeod County  
**District 6** – Karlin Ziegler, Olmsted County

May 15, 2025

Dear members of the Legacy Conference Committee,

On behalf of our organization—Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails (GMPT)—we are writing to provide feedback on H.F. 2563, the Omnibus Legacy Bill. GMPT is a non-profit advocacy organization made up of more than 135 cities, counties, parks groups, individuals, and others who seek to connect people to the outdoors and improve the quality of life for Minnesotans. Many of our local government members operate parks and trails that are designated as regionally significant and eligible to receive funding from the Legacy Fund.

We appreciate the work of both committees and thank you for your efforts. Although the parks and trails sections of both bills are similar, we urge this committee to adopt the language contained in the Senate version of the bill as explained below. Our biggest concern with the House version is the appropriation to Wilderness Inquiry from the Parks and Trails Fund, which we believe violates the language of the Legacy Amendment and diverts much-needed funds away from Greater Minnesota.

#### **The Importance of Regional Parks and Trails in Greater Minnesota.**

Regional parks and trails play an essential role in our recreation systems throughout Minnesota. They serve as a bridge between the local park around the corner and Minnesota's outstanding state parks. Regional parks and trails are a close-to-home option for both the community and visitors, offering unique and larger-scale recreation opportunities nearby.

Regional parks and trails have existed outside the metro area for decades, but they were not truly recognized until after the passage of the Legacy Amendment in 2008, and subsequent discussions shed light on the fact that the regional parks and trails of Greater Minnesota were being ignored. In 2013, the Legislature created the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC), which has been tasked with developing a system of regionally designated facilities in the 80 counties not served by the Metropolitan Council. Since then, 81 facilities, parks, trails, special features, and supportive partnerships across the state have been designated as regional through a rigorous evaluation process. This designation makes them eligible to receive Legacy Funding.

#### **Funding for Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails – We Support Senate and House Version**

The regional parks and trails of Greater Minnesota are woefully underfunded. Until 2023, their only source of funding was a 20% share of the Legacy Fund. In 2023, the Legislature dedicated 1.5% of Lottery-in-lieu funds to Greater Minnesota as well, a welcome addition though not nearly as much as the 22% that the Metro and the DNR receive from that same fund. Greater Minnesota's regional parks and trails do not have the same access to bonding or general fund resources either.

We want to thank both the House and Senate for continuing to recognize the importance of our parks and trails by allocating 20% of the available funds this year to Greater Minnesota (House version at Article 3, Senate version at Article 3). As we further explain below, we urge the Committee to devote as much of those funds as possible to projects at the regionally designated facilities in Greater Minnesota.

We also thank both bodies for extending the availability of several grant appropriations and canceling and returning unspent appropriations.

### **Reimbursing the DNR's Grant Fees – We Support the Senate Version**

Both the Senate and House versions of the bill reimburse the DNR for grant administration but differ in the amount. We support the **Senate version**.

The House version of this bill would allow the DNR to recover up to 2.5 % of Greater Minnesota's share of the Legacy Fund for the actual costs to administer grants (Lines 48.25 – 48.29). We urge the Committee to follow the lead set forth in the Senate version and cap the fee at a flat rate of \$140,000 per year, freeing up more than \$300,000 during the biennium for projects (Lines 49.29 – 49.33). That amount is an infinitesimally small portion of the DNR's budget but can make a significant difference for our members. That funding could go to the creative grantmaking that enabled a partnership between Isanti, Wright, and Stearns County for a mobile fleet of winter gear that gets people of all ages outdoors and helped create a mobile mountain bike fleet in Duluth to assist underserved kids and adults who are learning to bike. It could add potable water to a park reserve and trailhead or rehabilitate a section of trail. However the funds are used, please know they will be put to good use.

### **Funding Locally-Based Outdoor Programming – We Support the Senate Version**

We are deeply concerned with the portion of the bill that would allocate a portion of Greater Minnesota's Legacy funds to Wilderness Inquiry, a metro-based (Bloomington) nonprofit with national and international operations. Our members respect the work of Wilderness Inquiry but believe that its history and the culture-based learning it provides should be funded through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund as it has been in the past. There are multiple reasons that Greater Minnesota's Regional Parks and Trails funding should not be awarded in this manner:

- As explained earlier, the regional parks and trails of Greater Minnesota are already woefully underfunded. This allocation cuts into those scarce funds.
- The GMRPTC is already engaged in creative grantmaking to connect more people with the outdoors. For example, the mobile winter fleet and mobile mountain bike fleet mentioned above allow multiple facilities to provide equipment and programming on an ongoing basis to underserved communities. Other designated facilities have used the connection grants to obtain Track Chairs (all-terrain electric wheelchairs) that allow people of all abilities to get off the pavement and onto trails.
- Awarding the funds through the Commission instead helps to ensure that long-term investments can be made by organizations that are already based in Greater Minnesota.
- We also are concerned that the proposal may violate the language of the Minnesota Legacy Amendment and is, therefore, unconstitutional.

We appreciate all the time and energy this committee has put toward assembling this bill. Thank you for all your hard work.



Gina Hugo  
Parks Director, Sherburne County  
Chair, Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails



Joseph Tart  
Parks Director, Chisago County  
Vice Chair, Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails

# Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System

## Parks and Trails Legacy Fund

Dear Honorable Legislators:

On behalf of the 10 implementing agencies that make up the Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System, **we are writing regarding the following elements of the Senate and House passed versions of the Omnibus Legacy bill H.F. 2563.**

- **We support the continued 40/40/20 allocation in the Senate version of the bill.** This continues the tradition of allocating 40% of the Parks and Trail Legacy Fund for metropolitan regional parks, 40% to the Department of Natural Resources for state parks, and 20% to the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission for Greater Minnesota parks.
- **We support preserving funding for the prevention of aquatic invasive species through County Program Aid.**
- **We oppose any earmark out of the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund** that would allocate Parks and Trails Legacy funds to a nonprofit organization, which would be contrary to the clear constitutional intent of the Legacy Amendment. These funds are expressly dedicated to benefit state, regional, and Greater MN park and trail agencies—public entities that are accountable to taxpayers and have a proven track record of stewarding these resources for the public good.
- **We oppose removing the tool of eminent domain in land acquisition that utilizes Parks and Trails Legacy Fund.** While it is extremely rare, utilizing condemnation for park and trail projects is an important tool to have in the toolbox should it be necessary.

As always, we remain grateful for the work that you do with our agencies to provide vital park spaces and programs to metro area residents, and all the health, recreation and economic benefits that come from this investment.

Sincerely,

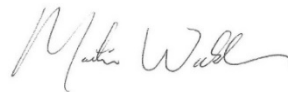
Jeff Perry  
Parks Director  
Anoka County



Ann Kattreh  
Parks and Recreation Director  
City of Bloomington



Martin Walsh  
Parks and Recreation Director  
Carver County



Niki Geisler  
Director of Parks  
Dakota County



Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System  
Parks and Trails Legacy Fund

Al Bangoura  
Superintendent  
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board



Mark McCabe  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
Ramsey County



Andy Rodriguez  
Parks and Recreation Director  
City of Saint Paul



C. Michael-jon Pease  
Executive Director  
Saint Paul Parks Conservancy



Patricia Freeman  
General Manager of Parks and Trails  
Scott County



Boe Carlson  
Superintendent  
Three Rivers Park District







May 14, 2025

Re: Support for Wilderness Inquiry in the Legacy Finance Omnibus Bill (HF2563)

**Legacy Finance Conference Committee**

Chair Founq Hawj

Rep. Samakab Hussein

Sen. Susan Pha

Chair Joe McDonald

Sen. Jennifer McEwen

Sen. Eric Pratt

Chair Samantha Vang

Sen. Zaynab Mohamed

Rep. Roger Skraba

Chairs and Members of the Legacy Finance Conference Committee:

Thank you for including funding for Wilderness Inquiry programming to maintain, enhance, and connect the next generation to Minnesota's history and cultural heritage in both the Senate and House Legacy finance omnibus bills.

Our programming model, known as Canoemobile, is unique in that it shows up where the kids are in neighborhoods and townships in every corner of the state. Wilderness Inquiry believes Everyone Belongs in the Outdoors, and we make sure every kid—regardless of their abilities or background—can participate in meaningful outdoor experiences.

As you reconcile the House and Senate positions, **please consider that the Senate position of \$485,000 in FY26 and \$485,000 in FY27 from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund will allow Wilderness Inquiry to further our impact and connect more than 8,500 youth and families to hands-on activities in the outdoors that teach about the history and cultural heritage of our state.** The lower funding level included in the House Legacy Finance Bill would significantly reduce our ability to deliver this important program statewide.

Additionally, shifting funding to the Parks & Trails Fund presents several serious obstacles for Wilderness Inquiry programming given the wide range of locations we serve that are not designated state or regional parks. Indeed, Canoemobile's greatest strength is reaching young people *where they are*, rather than requiring transportation to a distant location. Using the schools, community centers, and other public lands and waterways right in our youth participants' backyards is how we keep costs at just \$112/participant. Moreover, Canoemobile cultivates *local connections* to nature that participants can revisit again and again, inspiring a lifelong love for Minnesota's outdoor culture—especially for kids who would otherwise have never had the chance to try paddling or fishing even once.

Thank you for your leadership and support. We hope to partner with you to advance a strong Legacy bill so that we can serve many more youth in the next biennium.

With gratitude,

Erika Rivers, Executive Director

[erika@wildernessinquiry.org](mailto:erika@wildernessinquiry.org)

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**Northwest Community Television**  
6900 Winnetka Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

May 16, 2025

Members of the Legacy conference committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators (MACTA) and over 140 community cable television channels across the state, we write today to thank you for your diligence in assembling budgets to spend the state's Legacy funds. As you contemplate a final proposal, we ask you consider dedicated funding for community television.

Community television programming keeps community members connected, informed and entertained, from high school sports and city council meetings to newscasts and local events, through public, education and government (PEG) programming. Community cable television channels, which deliver programming through television and streaming, are valuable assets for all Minnesotans.

Community cable television provides vital, hyperlocal news. As newspapers across the state close, community cable TV is often the only place people can go for news about their specific community, whether it's high school sports, local government meetings, festivals and celebrations, veteran coverage and more. As technology has evolved, we have also evolved. Many stations now create and distribute their content on YouTube or Facebook to make it more accessible to viewers in the community and across the state.

But this advancement in technology has also hurt our funding sources. For 45 years, community television has been funded by cable television franchise fees and PEG fees. As each person moves away from cable television to streaming, our revenue is directly impacted. While we recognize that the Legacy conference committee may not be able to fund our full request for a statewide impact, even a modest investment prioritized for channels most in need can make a difference.

The Legacy committee has made a commitment to both community and statewide media in Minnesota. Like these television and radio stations, community cable TV helps share the rich history and cultural fabric of Minnesota – the stated purpose of the Legacy Amendment.

As you do the hard work of putting together a Legacy budget for the next two years, we ask that you consider funding community cable TV and the important work these stations do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shannon Slatton Schwartz'.

Shannon Slatton Schwartz  
Executive Director, CCX Media

NEWS

SPORTS

CITIES

CREATE

Brooklyn Center • Brooklyn Park • Crystal • Golden Valley • Maple Grove • New Hope • Osseo • Plymouth • Robbinsdale



## Minnesota Children's Museum

May 15, 2025

Members of the Legacy Finance Conference Committee:

I write to ask the conference committee to support the Senate position on funding for Minnesota Children's Museum (MCM), which preserves \$500,000 each year for MCM.

Legacy funds support important work at Minnesota Children's Museum. They have allowed us to develop new playful learning exhibits like our pretend vet clinic, Monsters on Summer Vacation and The Mud Zone. These exhibits are designed to facilitate child development, with a focus on sensory experiences, social-emotional learning and problem-solving skills. Depending on funding, we hope to introduce new exhibits focused on early Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) concepts and building confidence skills. We also look forward to the summer launch of programs focused on cultural competency.

Legacy funds allow us to open our doors to families who wouldn't normally be able to access the museum, through free nights with partner organizations. Thanks to Legacy funding provided in the previous biennium, we were able to provide 17 family nights, serving thousands of people with partners including multiple Head Start agencies, Baby's Space from the Little Earth community, and the Twin Cities Hispanic Coalition. These free events not only provide one-time museum access to families, but also often serve as an introduction to our access programs, opening the door for them to return.

The House Legacy Finance position – eliminating direct funding to MCM and allocating \$500,000 per year for competitive grants across at least 13 of Minnesota's children's museums – would be a devastating cut for MCM, resulting in staff reductions and elimination of future programming. We would be forced to halt the development and creation of multiple new exhibits at the museum: a new water-focused STEM exhibit that has been engaging 5th and 6th graders in a school project, a new storytelling exhibit that would help children develop vocabulary and communication skills, and new exhibits to spark creative thinking. We would also have to end our free family nights and eliminate four staff positions.

At the start of the 2025 legislative session, MCM requested a modest \$150,000 increase in Legacy funds from your committees. We have received flat funding for more than a decade and have struggled to stretch these dollars to achieve the same results. We recognize the difficult choices facing your conference committee and respectfully encourage you to support the Senate position, which maintains flat funding at \$500,000 annually for the important statewide work of MCM.

Thank you for your stewardship over these Legacy dollars. Be assured that MCM is committed to being your partner to support our youngest Minnesotans in an environment where they can grow and connect with each other on their developmental journey through the power of play.

Sincerely,

Dianne Krizan  
President



**From:** [Dave Hoang](#)  
**To:** [Morris, Andrew \(CAPM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Amendment 20 to HF 2563 (Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill) – A Respectful Call for Reflection and Leadership  
**Date:** Friday, May 16, 2025 8:04:40 PM

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From: **Dave Hoang** <[davidhoangrx@gmail.com](mailto:davidhoangrx@gmail.com)>  
Date: Thu, May 1, 2025 at 4:23 PM  
Subject: Amendment 20 to HF 2563 (Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill) – A Respectful Call for Reflection and Leadership  
To: Vietnamese Community Of Minnesota <[vietofmn@gmail.com](mailto:vietofmn@gmail.com)>, Martino Nguyen <[martinonguyenart@gmail.com](mailto:martinonguyenart@gmail.com)>

Honorable Senators,

On behalf of the **Vietnamese Community of Minnesota (VCM)**, I want to thank you for your public service and the thoughtful deliberation you bring to your role as a member of the Minnesota Senate. We are writing in response to the recent vote on **Amendment 20 to HF 2563**, introduced on April 30, 2025—a date that marked the **50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon** and the end of the Vietnam War.

As members of the Vietnamese American community, we watched the Senate floor debate closely. We understand that abstaining from the vote may not have been a reflection of your personal values, but rather a result of complex circumstances and internal leadership considerations. We recognize that these decisions are not always easy.

At the same time, we hope you will consider the weight of this moment. For many of our elders—Vietnamese veterans who served alongside American forces, and families who endured profound sacrifice—this commemoration represents the first and perhaps only opportunity to be formally recognized in their lifetimes. It is not only symbolic; it is deeply personal.

We write not in judgment, but with respect and sincere hope that you will continue to reflect on what this issue means to so many in our community. In moments like these, **silence is rarely neutral**. As this work continues, we respectfully invite your partnership in shaping an inclusive and honest public remembrance that honors those who stood with America at great cost.

We would welcome a continued conversation, and we remain hopeful that you will find a way to stand with our veterans and our communities—in this effort and in future moments of recognition.

With sincerity and respect,

**Tri Tang**

President

**Vietnamese Community of Minnesota (VCM)**

[VietofMN@gmail.com](mailto:VietofMN@gmail.com)

**From:** [Sia Her](#)  
**To:** [Morris, Andrew \(CAPM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Fwd: Amendment 20 to HF 2563 (Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill) – An Opportunity to Lead with Courage and Clarity  
**Date:** Friday, May 16, 2025 9:33:47 PM

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**From:** "Bana Soumetho, Chair – SEAL USA" <[chair@sealusa.org](mailto:chair@sealusa.org)>  
**To:** "Dave Hoang" <[davidhoangrx@gmail.com](mailto:davidhoangrx@gmail.com)>, "Sia Her" <[sia\\_her@yahoo.com](mailto:sia_her@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Thu, May 1, 2025 at 6:07 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Amendment 20 to HF 2563 (Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill) – An Opportunity to Lead with Courage and Clarity  
See below for the email sent to legislators who abstained.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bana Soumetho, Chair – SEAL USA** <[chair@sealusa.org](mailto:chair@sealusa.org)>  
Date: Thu, May 1, 2025 at 6:04 PM  
Subject: Amendment 20 to HF 2563 (Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill) – An Opportunity to Lead with Courage and Clarity  
To:

Dear Honorable Senator,

On behalf of the **Southeast Asian Alliance (SEAA)**, we extend our thanks for your ongoing public service and the complex responsibilities you shoulder as a member of the Minnesota Senate. We are writing in response to the recent vote on **Amendment 20 to HF 2563**, introduced on April 30—the 50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.

As a coalition of leaders, veterans, and advocates representing Southeast Asian communities, we followed the Senate floor debate closely. We understand that abstaining from the vote may not have been a reflection of your values, but rather the result of internal dynamics and difficult choices.

We also recognize that many who abstained may personally understand the moral urgency of honoring Southeast Asian veterans—many of whom fought alongside U.S.

forces in defense of shared democratic values. These are stories of sacrifice, loyalty, and belonging. For many of our elders, this commemoration is not just symbolic—it is deeply personal, and time-sensitive.

We write not to critique your abstention, but to ask you to consider what it means—to our communities, and to the public—to remain silent at such a critical moment. In times like these, silence is often interpreted as indifference. And indifference, whether intended or not, carries weight.

As the commemoration moves forward, and future efforts unfold to bring long-overdue recognition to Southeast Asian veterans and families, we ask that you join us in ensuring this is done with honesty, inclusion, and courage. We welcome the opportunity to engage further—whether publicly or privately—as we believe there is still time to lead on this issue.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to continued dialogue.

On behalf of the Southeast Asian Alliance (SEAA),

With respect,



**From:** [Dave Hoang](#)  
**To:** [Morris, Andrew \(CAPM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Thank You for Advancing Amendment 20 to HF 2563 (Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill) – From the Vietnamese Community of Minnesota  
**Date:** Friday, May 16, 2025 8:03:36 PM

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From: **Dave Hoang** <[davidhoangrx@gmail.com](mailto:davidhoangrx@gmail.com)>  
Date: Thu, May 1, 2025 at 3:55 PM  
Subject: Thank You for Advancing Amendment 20 to HF 2563 (Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill) – From the Vietnamese Community of Minnesota  
To: Vietnamese Community Of Minnesota <[vietofmn@gmail.com](mailto:vietofmn@gmail.com)>, Martino Nguyen <[martinonguyenart@gmail.com](mailto:martinonguyenart@gmail.com)>

Honorable Senators,

On behalf of the **Vietnamese Community of Minnesota (VCM)**, I extend our heartfelt gratitude for your support of **Amendment 20** to the Omnibus Legacy appropriations bill (HF 2563), introduced by Senator Eric Pratt on the evening of **April 30, 2025**—a date that marked the **50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon** and the official end of the Vietnam War.

Your support for this amendment—allocating an additional **\$150,000** to complement the \$150,000 appropriated last year—demonstrates a meaningful commitment to honoring the Vietnamese veterans who fought alongside American forces, as well as our Southeast Asian allies, including **Lao, Hmong, Cambodian, and other ethnic communities** who served in related U.S. operations across the region.

This funding will support a **joint statewide commemoration** through the Minnesota Humanities Center—an event envisioned as both a public recognition and a healing moment. It will bring together veterans from across Minnesota, from all backgrounds, to honor a legacy of sacrifice, courage, and shared values. For many of our aging veterans, this may be the final opportunity to be recognized in their lifetimes.

As the sun sets on their generation, we are reminded of the **ultimate gift they gave us—the gift of freedom, and a life outside the yoke of communism**. We owe them a remembrance worthy of their sacrifice, and your vote helps make that possible.

Thank you, on behalf of our veterans and the families who carry their legacy forward.

With deepest appreciation,



**Tri Tang**

President

**Vietnamese Community of Minnesota (VCM)**

[VietofMN@gmail.com](mailto:VietofMN@gmail.com)

**CAAVWV**  
**Coalition of Allied Afghan & Vietnam War Veterans**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102**



May 18, 2025

**Submitted Testimony regarding HF 2563 Legacy Finance Bill**

The Coalition of Allied Afghan and Vietnam War Veterans submits this testimony regarding the observations made on the disparities in gaining access to Legacy funding for Southeast Asian communities in the state of Minnesota.

It has been our observation over the past several sessions that access to Legacy funding has been denied to several Southeast Asian ethnic groups, while one ethnic group has received special attention and success.

Our observations have been substantiated and amplified this year when SF 1959, *Veteran Redefined*, was passed, omitting all other ethnic Minnesotan veterans who performed the same service during the Vietnam War era. Our observations and submitted testimony on that bill can be found by visiting: <https://www.cavwv.org/veteran-redefined.html> and the supporting pages related to that issue.

Our Coalition has observed that access to funding begins with a hearing on a bill submitted to the committee assigned to that bill by the state legislature and only moves forward if the Chairman of that assigned committee calls a hearing for its consideration. If the Chairman decides not to hear the bill, the bill dies and must wait until the next session for consideration. The fate of each bill resides in the Chairman's hands. If that Chairman has interest or lack of interest in the legislation for whatever reason, the bill's fate is determined.

Over the past several sessions, we have observed significant disparity in access to funding and hearings being called in favor of one ethnic Southeast Asian community while denying access to hearings and funding opportunities for others.

An example of this occurred last year when we observed that a five-hundred-thousand-dollar non-competitive grant was awarded to one veteran group, while other veterans' groups had failed to get any hearing for the same purpose in previous sessions. This was amplified when the associated ethnic community received an additional three-hundred-thousand-dollar non-competitive grant to showcase their first family, who emigrated to Minnesota in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Other Southeast Asian communities had also requested funding but were denied a hearing. A last-ditch effort by the Council of Asian Pacific Minnesotans, which gained some public attention and limited press coverage, attempted to introduce a bill for a competitive grant for the same purpose, which was to be shared by those communities. This bill was also denied a hearing. This year, that same bill was reintroduced in both the House and Senate. That bill was denied a hearing in the Senate, but for the first time, HF 1440 received a hearing in the House, though it has not been added to this year's Legacy bill.

The observations we have witnessed are troubling, to say the least. Our State and State Legislature, which prides itself on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and requires it to be taught in our school systems, does not seem to practice what it has codified in law.

For the record, we think it is important to state these observations and ask this committee's administrator to distribute a copy of this testimony to all members of each House and Senate Legacy Committee, to the Leadership of the State Legislature, to the Legislature's Ethics Committee, to the Department of Human Rights, and to the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans.

We intend to continue our observations and collect more examples of the disparity and injustice faced by Southeast Asian communities who have been omitted from accessing funding for their projects, especially this year, to commemorate their legacy and contributions to Minnesota during this anniversary year of the ending of the Vietnam Conflict.

Respectfully submitted,

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