

March 17, 2023

Chair Klevorn & Members of the House State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Sam Olbekson. I am an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation of Minnesota Ojibwe and am serving as the 2023 president of the American Institute of Architects Minnesota. On behalf of our more than 2,300 architects and design professionals, I am writing in support of HF 1863. Specifically, I want to express our support for the provisions in the bill that would adjust dollar thresholds and establish a regular review process for the State Designer Selection Board program, or SDSB.

The SDSB selects the primary designer for major building construction and remodeling projects for state agencies, the U of M, and MN State using a qualifications-based selection process. This bill updates the dollar thresholds that designate which projects go through the SDSB process to reflect modern construction costs. The current thresholds were set in 1996, which means that many projects that were not originally meant to go through this process are now subject to it purely on a cost basis. I think we can all agree that what \$2 million purchased in 1996 is vastly different than what it would purchase today.

Requiring a regular review will help ensure that the threshold continues to accurately reflect the prices and economic realities of design and construction, allowing the SDSB process to focus on the more complex projects it was intended to.

This bill does not change the process for projects that fall under the threshold. Those smaller, less design-intense projects go through the state's regular procurement process now and will continue to do so under this bill. Keeping the threshold at an appropriate level balances our dual goals of quality and efficiency - the simpler selection process for these smaller projects allows for greater bidding participation from a broader group of Minnesota businesses and professionals, while the SDSB focuses on more design-intensive projects.

We value the work of the State Designer Selection Board and believe this change will help keep the Board mission-focused and operating efficiently to produce the highest quality design work in Minnesota.

Please support HF 1863. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sam Olbekson, AIA, AICAE, NOMA  
President, AIA Minnesota  
Founder and CEO, Full Circle Indigenous Planning + Design