



**Range Association of
Municipalities and Schools**

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March 28, 2025

Representative Spencer Igo
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: RAMS Letter of Support – HF1161 - School district seasonal tax base replacement aid

Representative Igo,

On behalf of the board of the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS), representing 27 cities, 29 townships, and 15 public school districts on the Iron Range of Northeastern Minnesota, I would like to indicate our support for your school district seasonal tax base replacement aid bill HF1161.

There are 92 rural school districts without an operating levy, and all of them are in Greater Minnesota. Despite recent historic investments in education, districts across northeastern Minnesota are experiencing the compounding effect of equally historic underfunding. Disparities continue to widen between urban and rural schools. Our districts with lower tax base watch from the sidelines as Metro counterparts pass referendum after referendum to support schools. Recent operating levy referendum failures across northeastern Minnesota send a chilling effect through our regional communities. Many have given up hope of trying to generate the necessary funds for their districts. Districts are searching for a way to have a real conversation with voters. They need more tools to get to “yes”.

When school operating levy dollars on seasonal/recreational property are directed to the state business levy, not the school district, it widens the disparity. This bill fixes a problem by redirecting property tax dollars back to the school district from where it was generated. For these districts, especially those who currently have a levy, this legislation will mean immediate savings for taxpayers.

We are grateful that you, with bipartisan and bicameral support from Range Delegation co-authors and others, are tackling this disparity between rural and urban schools by embracing this new solution. Please help direct our local dollars toward delivering on the promise of a uniform system of public instruction for Minnesota students. We urge your colleagues to support HF1161.

Sincerely,

Paul Peltier

Executive Director - Approved by board action 2/27/25

***Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS)** The organization represents more than 155,000 residents and over 70 public sector units of government, including 27 cities, 29 townships, and 15 public school districts in the 13,000 square mile Taconite Assistance Area (TAA) of northeast Minnesota. As an organization, RAMS has represented the interests of the Iron Range region for 85 years.*

