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Minnesota business leaders back proposed \$220-plus million homelessness proposal

We stand by our community partners and their calls for bold public investments in the emergency shelter system this legislative session.

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As leaders in the Minnesota business community, we understand that safe and stable homes support a strong workforce and a stable economy that underpins our success. And we know that the absence of a home can lead to significant personal repercussions. Whether brought on by racial disparity or a health or financial crisis, there are many among us who are just one step away from falling into homelessness.

In cities and counties across Minnesota, emergency shelters play a critical role in offering stability and a jumping-off point for individuals in crisis who are working to rebuild a stable home. But these shelters are forced to rely on private and philanthropic donations, which alone aren't enough to match the extent of the homelessness crisis.

We believe that now is the time for state lawmakers to invest in Minnesota's emergency shelter system and those experiencing homelessness. Practical solutions are already on the table – including \$70 million in ongoing funding for shelter operations through the Emergency Services Program and \$150 million to increase shelter capacity across the state. Building on these core investments are requests for aid from trusted shelter providers and local governments that could launch innovative pilot projects and expand existing programs with proven results.

These investments aren't just the right thing to do, they're the smart thing to do.

- **Providing long-term dividends:** Emergency shelter services offer cost savings for larger and more costly systems down the road, including the healthcare, education, and criminal justice systems.
- **Strengthening our economy:** Employees are less likely to be successful at work without the certainty of a safe place to sleep at night and a place to store their things. Emergency shelters can provide some constancy to help individuals in crisis maintain employment and more quickly get back on their feet.
- **Investing in trusted programs:** Minnesota is already home to a robust network of nonprofit emergency services providers that serve as the state's safety net. They know what works. Investing in them will support our communities and people in need.

Providers, communities, and bipartisan legislators from across Minnesota have long called for these investments to address the state's homelessness crisis. But now, as we witness growing numbers of encampments and shelters operating beyond capacity, Minnesota has a real opportunity to draw on a record state budget surplus and make a lasting difference.

We stand by our community partners and their calls for bold public investments in the emergency shelter system this legislative session. Together, we can end homelessness and create communities where everyone can thrive.