

April 3, 2023

TO:

Senate Majority Leader Kari Dziedzic
Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman
Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan
Chair Lindsey Port, Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee
Chair Michael Howard, House Housing Finance & Policy Committee
Chair Ann Rest, Senate Taxes Committee
Chair Aisha Gomez, House Taxes Committee

RE: Letter in Support of a Metro Affordable Housing Sales Tax

We write to you today as fellow elected officials who understand the housing affordability crisis in our communities, and are seeking sustainable solutions from the State. **Investing in permanent affordable housing is a necessity for all Minnesotans** because stable housing is proven to improve outcomes in health, education, employment, and more.

Residents are struggling as housing costs continue to rise faster than wages. **In the 7-county metro, 323,405 households pay more than 30% of their income toward housing—after that, people can barely cover rising costs for food, medicine, bills, or education.** Impacted households are those who can least afford it, including BIPOC families, seniors aging in place, kids and young people, and immigrant households.

The need for affordable housing is higher than we've had the funding to meet. **During Minnesota's latest round of funding, we received several times more requests than the funding capacity.** And the strain of lacking affordable housing options has devastating impacts—for example, since the end of the Statewide Emergency Rental Assistance Program, the number of families entering Hennepin shelters *outpace* families exiting at a rate of 2 to 1. No kid or family should be out in the Minnesota cold.

Dedicated State revenue is essential to tackling our region's housing affordability crisis. The "Metro Affordable Housing Sales Tax" would provide ongoing funding to meet our housing crisis and improve health outcomes, access to education, and employment opportunities for Minnesotans.

We urge you to support this important legislation and **create a dedicated funding stream to ensure housing stability** for all of our neighbors, and to create affordable, dignified, and safe places to live for all of our residents.

Sincerely,

Irene Fernando
Hennepin County Board of
Commissioners, Chair

Angela Conley
Hennepin County Housing and
Redevelopment Authority,
Chair

Marion Greene
Hennepin County Regional
Railroad Authority, Chair

Jeff Lunde
Hennepin County
Intergovernmental Relations
Committee, Co-Chair

Chris LaTondresse
Hennepin County
Commissioner

Mandy Meisner
Anoka County Commissioner

April Graves
Brooklyn Center Mayor

Shep Harris
Golden Valley Mayor

Rachel James
Columbia Heights City Council
Member

(Signatures continue below)

Justice Spriggs

Columbia Heights City Council
Member

Therese Kiser

Crystal City Council Member,
Ward 1

Kristy Janigo

Maple Grove City Council
Member, At-Large

Elliott Payne

Minneapolis City Council
Member, Ward 1

Jason Chavez

Minneapolis City Council
Member, Ward 9

Aisha Chughtai

Minneapolis City Council
Member, Ward 10

Kimberly Wilburn

Minnetonka City Council
Member, At-Large

Kissy Coakley

Minnetonka City Council
Member, 4th Ward

Lynette Dumalag

Saint Louis Park City Council
Member, Ward 2

Mitra Jalali

Saint Paul City Council
Member, Ward 4

Nelsie Yang

Saint Paul City Council
Member, Ward 6

Helen Bassett

Robbinsdale School Board
Director

Jen Westmoreland

Hopkins School Board, Chair