



April 28, 2021

Dear Members of the Jobs Conference Committee (SF 1098),

Metro Cities appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Jobs omnibus bills being considered by this conference committee.

Redevelopment Grant and Demolition Loan Program – Metro Cities supports a line-item appropriation for the redevelopment program and encourages the committee to fund the program. Previous redevelopment funding awards from the state have allowed creative reuse of brownfield sites, new buildings that meet local economic needs, a stronger local tax base, locally employed workers and increased job opportunities, including jobs associated with site preparation and new site uses. An \$8 million appropriation in FY22-23 would allow DEED to fund \$1 million to both the metro and greater Minnesota in both annual rounds over the biennium. This would still leave the program oversubscribed but would allow some projects to move forward. Metro Cities is concerned the MIF funding levels in the House bill would preclude internal transfers at DEED from MIF to redevelopment, leaving redevelopment unfunded the next two years.

Minnesota Investment Fund and Job Creation Fund – MIF and JCF economic development funds in the bills are Minnesota's response to the global competition that exists for where businesses choose to make investments. While other states invest hundreds of millions of dollars in job attraction efforts, Minnesota's long-standing and relatively modest investments mean good paying jobs for workers in the Minnesota communities where capital investments are made. Metro Cities supports the Senate funding levels that would position Minnesota to support expanding business needs and new business investments as the state positions for post-pandemic recovery. Metro Cities supports the hiring and capital investment deadline flexibility for businesses impacted by the pandemic and supports the funds being available until expended.

Workforce Development funding - Metro Cities recognizes the needs to train new workers and retrain incumbent workers to match current and future jobs and supports the range of workforce funds included in the bills, including the Job Skills Partnership. Additional public support for businesses facing hardship due to the pandemic is also important for local economies. Access to these funds will help stabilize businesses and aid in economic recovery.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Metro Cities is available to answer any questions as the conference committee completes its work.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlie Vander Aarde".

Charlie Vander Aarde
Government Relations Specialist