



Dedicated to a Strong Greater Minnesota

March 8, 2011

Dear Senator Ingebretsen, Representative Urdahl and Representative McNamara,

We are writing on behalf of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) to express our grave concern with the governor's proposed allocation of Park & Trail Legacy Funds. The CGMC is an organization of 77 cities located outside the metropolitan area. Regional Parks and Trails play a vital role in our communities. These parks help draw tourists to our towns and provide important recreational opportunities for our citizens.

The recommendation would allocate 42% exclusively to the Department of Natural Resources for State parks and 42 % exclusively to the Metropolitan regional parks and trails. Greater Minnesota Regional parks and trails do not receive any dedicated or exclusive funds, but rather must compete with the metro area for a share of the remaining 16% dedicated to the statewide Parks & Trails Legacy Grants Program. The proposed formulation suggests that regional parks located within the metropolitan area are much more important than those located in greater Minnesota. We hope you disagree and recognize that these parks and trails are equally important to our communities.

We agree with the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition that a more equitable formulation dedicating an equal share of money to greater Minnesota regional parks are needed. We ask that as you formulate the Legacy Funding bill you set aside funds that are equitable and exclusive to greater Minnesota.

Thank you for your support of our communities.

Best regards,

Heidi Omerza
Ely City Councilwoman
Co-Chair CGMC Environment Committee

Crystal Prentice
Waseca City Manager
Co-Chair CGMC Environment Committee