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State Representative **TINA LIEBLING**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FEBRUARY 14, 2006

Dear Friends,

Although the 2006 Session does not officially convene until March 1st, activity at the Capitol is picking up. Committees have begun to meet and new legislative proposals are being announced daily. As I attend committee hearings and see other legislators again, many are asking about the recent proposal for expanded higher education offerings in Rochester. I am pleased to say that the Rochester Higher Education Development Committee delivered a solid proposal that I fully support. Helping to guide the proposal through the legislative process will be one of my top priorities this session.

It is now the second year of the two-year budget cycle, when the Legislature borrows money to build and improve public buildings and other infrastructure. The projects are detailed in one large bill called the "bonding bill." During the fall and winter, legislative committees have been touring the state to evaluate requests for these funds. The Governor communicates his bonding priorities to the legislature and the House and Senate eventually come up with one bill. (Except, as you may remember, in the "do nothing" year of 2004 when the system broke down and no bonding bill was passed.) I am pleased that the governor has included \$8 million for the proposed Rochester biosciences development center in his bonding priorities. Although the Governor did not include other projects of interest to Rochester, such as the Regional Public Safety Training Center and the National Volleyball Center, Rochester legislators will be working together to include these projects in the final bill.

I will be holding a series of listening sessions before the session begins. Please stop by and share your thoughts on issues facing the Legislature. If you can't stop by, I still appreciate your calls, letters, and e-mails.

Warm regards, 

University of Minnesota-Rochester will be an asset for the whole state

The report submitted by the Rochester Higher Education Committee does not propose a "new four year university." Rather, it seeks to expand the University of Minnesota's research presence in Rochester to leverage our unique resources in health sciences, biosciences, engineering, and technology. Degrees would still come from the main campus of the U. Some Rochester residents may be

disappointed that this will not be an independent branch of the U and will have no liberal arts component. But in these days of limited resources for higher education—when many exciting programs are already offered at other institutions in and around Rochester—a focused approach is essential.

Last session, Rochester's legislative delegation worked together to get funding for the committee. We had widespread support from legislators in both parties and both legislative bodies. The committee delivered a solid proposal for investments that will pay off many times over. The proposal presents an exciting opportunity for Minnesota to build the economy of the future. We must seize it.

UPCOMING LISTENING SESSIONS

Over the next several weeks, I will be holding a series of listening sessions around Rochester. This is an opportunity for me to hear your views and ideas about important issues facing the upcoming 2006 Legislature.

Please join me for one of the following sessions:

- Tuesday, February 21, 1:00 pm
Rochester Senior Center, 121 N Broadway
- Monday, February 27, 4:00 pm
Jefferson Elementary School, 1201 10th Avenue NE, Rochester
- Monday, February 27, 6:00 pm
Longfellow School, 1615 Marion Road SE, Rochester
- Monday, February 27, 11:00 am
Charter House, Cultural Arts Room (Charter House residents only.)
- Monday, February 27, 1:00 pm
Shorewood Senior Living Center, Card Room (Shorewood residents only.)

Other Legislative Priorities

During the warmest January on record, concerns about global warming were on many minds. Reputable scientists no longer dispute that human activity is warming the earth. The only question is how fast, and with what consequences.

Although the major responsibility for addressing the issue rests with the federal government, we must all do what we can to avert the serious and possibly catastrophic consequences that further warming will bring.

With this in mind, I have agreed to be the House sponsor of a bill requiring Minnesota to adopt California standards regarding low emission vehicles. I will also be introducing legislation to help Minnesota's schools save energy.

I will tell you about some of my other bills in future updates.