



AIA Minnesota

May 1, 2020

Dear Representative Freiberg,

We are writing on behalf of AIA-MN to express our appreciation and support for your bill, HF 4605, which allows local governments to accept electronic signatures & documents during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

AIA-MN is the professional association of Minnesota's 2,300 architects that advances the creation of vibrant communities and enduring architectural design. While design and construction have been deemed critical sectors, COVID-19 has still had a significant impact on our industry. The sudden economic downturn has had a chilling effect on many construction projects as clients reassess their own financial situations and needs. This makes it even more important to keep the projects that are still active moving forward.

This bill will greatly increase the ability of Minnesota's architects to continue to work remotely and safely and give our local governments a new tool to keep their local construction projects on track. This week we heard from a member that a project's notarized signature requirement is preventing them from submitting a proposal because of safety concerns due to their underlying health issues. Stories like that are all too common right now and these situations put our small businesses at a real disadvantage. The COVID-19 crisis will eventually wane, but this kind of flexibility would also be beneficial in our "new normal" to allow for quick and safe document authentication, so we hope you will consider making this a permanent change. We must do everything we can to support Minnesota's economy, and this modification will benefit the architecture, engineering and construction industries and our local communities.

Thank you for bringing this bill forward and for all you and your fellow legislators are doing to help Minnesotans during this incredibly challenging time. We at AIA Minnesota stand ready to work with you on this and other efforts to help Minnesota recover from this crisis.

Sincerely,

Mary-Margaret Zindren
Executive Vice President
AIA Minnesota

Bob Shaffer, AIA
Co-Chair, Government Affairs Committee
AIA Minnesota
Principal, Foundation Architects

cc: Members of the House Government Operations Committee