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March 15, 2021

Rep. Fue Lee, Chair
Capital Investment Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Mary Murphy, Vice Chair
Capital Investment Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Lee and Vice Chair Murphy:

Please accept this letter of support for Funny Asian Women Kollektive (FAWK) and the development of the Asian American Center for Media and the Arts (AACMA) in Saint Paul.

Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC) improves arts access for communities in the seven-county metropolitan area through support to artists and organizations. MRAC relies on community members from the metro area to serve as grant reviewers that make funding recommendations to MRAC's board of directors. This review process evaluates programs and projects based on a number of criteria including community need, ability, and impact. Since 2019, FAWK has received \$32,000 in grant awards to support their work using comedy and humor to combat the invisibility and dehumanization of Asian women. These awards are a testament to the needs that FAWK is addressing, and the importance of their work to the community.

The idea of an Asian American Arts Center in Saint Paul is not new, but having the right leadership is key.

FAWK is led by award-winning artists May Lee-Yang, Saymoukda Vongsay, and Naomi Ko – all of whom have been leading with their art locally and nationally for nearly two decades. Their commitment to the arts and their communities is directly aligned with MRAC's mission. Realizing the AACMA would be more than just an asset for Saint Paul, it would be meeting the social, cultural and economic needs of the community.

As the Asian American community continues to grow and diversify, creative placemaking efforts like the AACMA can have an incredible ripple effects for the people and the place. Having a Center where people can come together to create and share experiences, build trust with each other and safety for the neighborhood, as well as creating opportunities for community economic development makes a lot of sense for the East side of Saint Paul.

Please consider a bonding bill for the Asian American Arts Center for Media and the Arts in Saint Paul.

Looking forward,

Kathy Mouacheupao
Executive Director
Metropolitan Regional Arts Council