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April 14, 2021

Dear Chair Moran and Ways and Means Committee Members,

I am writing today in strong support of HF 38, the Disaster Assistance Contingency Account (DACA) funding bill. HF 38 provides the necessary funding and replenishment for the DACA in FY 21.

This account was established under Chapter 12 in 2014 to provide assistance for uninsured damage to public infrastructure and response cost. The account was created so the State would have the resources needed to immediately address the needs of Minnesotans after a disaster, without the legislature calling a special session.

Since 2019 alone the account has been used to help assist in 2 federally declared disasters and 20 Governor declared disasters. These disasters have affected 196 counties in Minnesota and 17 tribal governments. The DACA has transferred out \$24.5 million from state funds and helped Minnesota receive another \$75 million from FEMA.

Currently the account has \$3.2 million in unobligated funds. I do not believe that is satisfactory level of funding given the time left in FY21. While flooding is not currently projected to cause major issues this spring that can change drastically between now and June 30, 2021. With limited funds in the account, the State might not be able to properly help local communities respond to a disaster.

Disasters triggering both state and federal relief are trending upwards. Over the last three years, Minnesota has averaged 10 state disasters and one federal disaster annually. The associated transfers from the DACA over the same time have been approximately \$22,000,000 each year.

Unfortunately, this fund cannot stop the disasters from occurring but having quick and reliable funding from the State allows communities all around Minnesota to recover as quickly as possible. I strongly urge you to support HF 38 and thank Representative Pelowski for bringing this bill forward again this year.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Harrington".

John M. Harrington
Commissioner-Department of Public Safety