


May 9, 2022

TO: Senator Mary Kiffmeyer, Chair and Representative Michael Nelson, Chair and Members of the State Government and Transportation Conference Committee

FROM: Kent Whitworth, Director and CEO 

RE: 2022 State Government and Transportation Supplemental Budget - HF4293

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As you begin discussions on the final State Government and Transportation Supplemental Budget Bill, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) would appreciate the Conference Committee's support for several provisions in the bills, as described in this memo.

MNHS sincerely appreciates the House and Senate's ongoing support for the Minnesota Historical Society's work to preserve and share Minnesota's history statewide.

**Appropriations:**

We support the House's proposals for the Operating Adjustment and Reopening Assistance. This funding will allow the Minnesota Historical Society to better serve the public at historic sites and museums across the state. The Minnesota Historical Society has been hit hard by pandemic closures, with historic sites and museums now beginning to recover. As we reopen and increase service to the public, one-time financial support for the reopening initiative will help us to bridge to increased hours and increased revenues.

**Policy provisions:**

**Chapter 138 Provisions: SHPO transfer (House, Article 2, sections 60-61)**

The Minnesota Historical Society supports provisions in the House bill that would clarify and complete statutory updates for the transfer of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to the Minnesota Department of Administration.

Section 60 clarifies that the MNHS is responsible for historical and archaeological data. In this context, "data" includes collections and artifacts recovered in archaeological work. MNHS holds over 2.5 million such objects in its collections, making MNHS the most appropriate entity to preserve this important material. Section 61 of the House bill clarifies that the procedures that must be followed for preservation reviews are SHPO's, rather than MNHS's; and permits the MNHS to appoint either an employee or a non-employee to a dispute resolution panel, whichever may be most appropriate for a specific case, based on applicable expertise.

Memo To: Senator Mary Kiffmeyer, Chair and Representative Michael Nelson, Chair and Members of the State Government and Transportation Conference Committee

May 9, 2022

Page 2

Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) provisions

The Minnesota Historical Society is supportive of the identical provisions in both bills that set staggered terms for citizen members, but opposes the change in the appointment by MNHS.

The Senate bill changes the appointment for one of the members of the Commission from the Minnesota Historical Society to the State Historic Preservation Office. The Minnesota Historical Society does not support this provision. The work of the MRPC is to promote and protect the important features of the Mississippi River and the Great River Road. Many of these features, such as historic sites that are along the Mississippi River, are the responsibility of the Minnesota Historical Society, so participation and coordination with the Minnesota Historical Society are helpful to the Commission's work. The Minnesota Historical Society has proudly served this Commission for many years, alongside agency and citizen members, and hopes to continue to do so in the future.

The Minnesota Historical Society appreciates the Conference Committee's support for these provisions under your consideration.