

April 13, 2021

Representative Rena Moran
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
449 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: H.F. 1670 Omnibus Labor and Industry Finance and Policy Bill

Dear Representative Moran,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.F. 1670, the Labor and Industry Omnibus bill. I appreciate inclusion of the Governor's budget recommendations for the department, as they support our economic recovery, improve worker protections and enable the agency to better meet the needs of the Minnesotans we serve.

The agency supports the following key department priorities in the bill:

- **Extending remaining information technology funds** from a prior appropriation will enable continued improvements to DLI's Workers' Compensation Modernization Program, Work Comp Campus;
- **Establishing a net-zero goal for the commercial energy code** will improve energy efficiency in commercial and large multi-family buildings;
- **Maintaining construction fee** reductions for licenses, building permits, and plan review services will save the construction industry \$4.5 million in FY22 and 23;
- **Increasing the frequency of payouts from the Contractor Recovery Fund** and the amount of funds available will better protect homeowners who have suffered a financial loss due to a licensed contractor's fraudulent, deceptive or dishonest practices;
- **The Labor Standards operating adjustment** addresses increasing cost pressures and will enable the division to maintain capacity to support employers on labor law compliance and employees on worker rights;
- **Expanding access to pregnancy and parental leave** supports children and families by ensuring more new parents can take up to 12 weeks off from work to care for a new or adopted child without fear of losing their jobs;

- **Better accommodating nursing mothers, lactating and pregnant employees** in the workplace contributes to healthy expectant and new parents and healthy babies and supports employee retention and productivity;
- **Requiring accrual of earned sick and safe time** will mean Minnesotans don't have to make the difficult choice between caring for themselves or a loved one or paying their bills;
- **The Apprenticeship operating adjustment** will mean additional support for employers seeking to develop a skilled and diverse workforce;
- **The Minnesota OSHA operating adjustment** will help ensure Minnesota OSHA can promptly address workplace safety and health concerns and prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities;
- **Keeping Minnesota OSHA penalties in line with federal OSHA** for employers that fail to provide safe and healthy workplaces for their workers will ensure continued federal funding and will encourage employers to take workplace safety and health violations more seriously;
- **Requiring provision of emergency paid sick leave** supports health care providers and other essential workers and will improve economic security for these workers and positively impact public health.

I also appreciate inclusion of the proposal to require oil refinery contractors to participate in registered apprenticeship for work in the construction and maintenance of oil refineries, as it will ensure workers have access to the skills and training needed to perform the job safely.

In addition, I am pleased the bill includes the agency's policy initiatives to bring Minnesota's apprenticeship program into conformity with federal equal opportunity in employment provisions, make OSHA citation data public to improve workplace safety, protect child labor data, and add energy and accessibility members to the Construction Codes Advisory Council.

Regrettably, the bill includes an \$848,000 cut to the agency's information technology modernization project. This proposal was withdrawn in the Governor's supplemental budget recommendations. Without this funding, DLI will be unable to fully modernize software applications that began running out of vendor support in January 2021, decreasing transparency and increasing transaction time for stakeholders interacting with the agency. I urge reconsideration of this funding decision.

The provisions in the Labor Omnibus bill prioritize workers and our economic recovery. The proposals will lead to a stronger One Minnesota.

Representative Rena Moran

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roslyn C. Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Roslyn C. Robertson

Commissioner

cc: Representative Pat Garofalo, Republican Lead, Ways and Means Committee

Representative Rob Ecklund, Chair, Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee

Representative Joe McDonald, Co-Republican Lead, Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee

Representative Bob Dettmer, Co-Republican Lead, Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee