

***Excelsior Fire District***

***Proudly serving the Communities of:***

***Deephaven-Excelsior-Greenwood-Shorewood Tonka Bay***

**24100 Smithtown Road**

**Shorewood, MN. 55331**

March 14, 2023

Senator Kelly Morrison SENT VIA EMAIL

Minnesota State Capital sen.kelly.morrison@senate.mn

St. Paul, MN 55155

**Re: Support for Local Control Options for EMS, SF2691**

Dear Senator Morrison,

I am contacting you on behalf of the Excelsior Fire District to request you strongly support Senate File 2691, which is authored by Senators Hoffman, Abeler, and Kupec. This bipartisan legislation will add local control options for Emergency Medical Services as well as provide improved oversight by the state’s Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB).

This legislation maintains full oversight by the EMSRB and, in fact, strengthens it with increased reporting requirements by Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers. Thus, the legislation would improve the ability of the EMSB to provide quality oversight for EMS providers in Minnesota.

At the risk of being too blunt, the legislation will help address the issues of an EMS system that is increasingly broken in Minnesota because of reimbursement issues. It recognizes the fact that if the state and cities started from scratch, the EMS response model would likely be different than it is today. It would not be a state-mandated one-size-fits-all model for rural, suburban, and urban areas – but would rather be responsive to local needs.

The current EMS model fails to recognize the fact that in most parts of Minnesota, including your district, the name “fire department” has become a misnomer with roughly 75% of fire department responses being for medical calls. Improved fire prevention measures have greatly reduced the number of critical fire incidents that fire departments respond to, which is of course a good thing. At the same time, improved training has increased the professionalism of both full-time and on-call fire departments from what it was when the state’s current EMS model was implemented. Common sense dictates that local governments should be able to consider and implement alternative emergency response models.

We understand that EMS providers’ limited resources stem from reimbursement issues with it being unlikely that Medicaid and Medicare reimburse them for their true costs. In addition, if an EMS provider dispatches and no transport is needed, they typically do not receive any reimbursement despite having incurred real costs. We are unaware of any realistic fixes that are being proposed to the current EMS reimbursements. Thus, if the cities and our EMS partners are to provide the Emergency Response Services that our residents need and expect, legislation such at SF 2691 is needed to remove the inflexible straitjacket of the current legislation and allow us to consider new service delivery models.

Three members of the Senate’s Health & Human Services Committee on which you serve have authored SF2691 in a bipartisan manner. Your strong support of the legislation at the committee and senate leadership level would be greatly appreciated. It is important to note that the legislation allows consideration of, but does not mandate, new emergency response models. We recognize there may be special interests on all sides that may be fighting to defend their existing turf. Our hope is that the proposed legislation will allow discussions which focus on which long-term models will provide the best constituent services in an economically maintainable manner in your senate district and throughout the entire state.

Sincerely,

**Curt Mackey, Fire Chief**

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