

State Representative District 47B

MELISSA HORTMAN

SESSION UPDATE

March 2006



*Dear Friends,
Welcome to my first email update of the 2006 legislative session. I will be sending these out periodically throughout the session with information about developments with the legislature, and general information that I hope you will find helpful.*

As in the past, if you do not want to continue receiving this update, please call my office and ask to be removed from the mailing list.

I look forward to hearing from you throughout the session as I continue to work on your behalf.

*Thank you,
State Representative
Melissa Hortman*



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Make jobs bill a priority

On the first day of the legislative session, I joined with my fellow DFL freshmen in calling for the bonding bill to be our top priority this session. While we recognize that we all have individual issues and policies we want to pursue, we believe strongly that the bonding bill is good for the state as a whole. It addresses the issues that are the most important to every Minnesotan – education, health care, the environment and jobs.

Of course, this bill also offers a significant benefit for our area as we work for inclusion of funding for the Northstar Corridor.

Property tax relief

Over the past three years, regardless of income level, property owners across the state have borne the brunt of the cuts that were passed to balance the state budget. In fact, state property taxes have gone up by more than \$1 billion, with another 10.2 percent increase predicted for next year. We need to do something to ease the burden on property owners who have paid more than their fair share of state services.

Last November, the state budget forecast announced a \$337 million state surplus that went into the Tax Relief Account. I believe that a portion of that surplus should be used to provide property tax relief; two possible options are restoring the Market Value Homestead Credit Aid or providing equalization equity aid to property poor school districts.

Property Tax Refund

I encourage residents to find out if they

are eligible for one of the two state property tax refunds. The Regular Refund is based on your household income and the amount of property tax you pay. The Special Refund is not based on income. To qualify for the Special Refund, your net property tax must increase by at least 12% and \$100. For more information or to determine if you are eligible for either of these refunds, read and fill out Form MIPR. Forms and instructions are available from the State of Minnesota www.taxes.state.mn.us/taxes/prop_refund/forms.shtml. You may also call the Department of Revenue at 651-296-3781.

Recycle fluorescent bulbs to reduce mercury

There is growing concern in our state about the danger of mercury contamination and the threat it poses to the health of Minnesotans - especially our children - and the safety of our water and fish.

One easy way to keep mercury out of our environment is to recycle your fluorescent light bulbs instead of throwing them in the garbage. In fact, by recycling fluorescent light bulbs, consumers can take 100 pounds of mercury out of Minnesota's environment every year.

I recently authored legislation that would require utilities, lighting manufacturers and retailers to inform consumers that fluorescent light bulbs contain mercury.

Recycling fluorescent light bulbs is one way that individuals can easily contribute to reducing mercury in our environment