



"Quality of Life through Community, Industry, Environment, Recreation, and Education"

5525 Emerald Avenue
Mt. Iron, MN 55768
Phone: 218.748.7651

February 4, 2026

Honorable Governor Tim Walz
Honorable Members of the Minnesota Legislature
State Capitol
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Governor Walz, Minnesota State Representatives and Senators:

As mayors of cities throughout Northeastern Minnesota, we are directly responsible for providing critical services, protecting public safety, and sustaining communities where residents and businesses can prosper. From this vantage point of day-to-day accountability, we feel compelled to share our serious concern with the state's current fiscal trajectory and the growing effects it is having on our cities and the people who depend on us.

We see firsthand how decisions made at the state level ripple outward. Cities across our region are experiencing reduced capacity to plan responsibly, maintain infrastructure, hire and retain employees, and sustain core services without placing additional strain on local taxpayers.

Northeastern Minnesota is a distinct, vital part of this state. Minnesota is one of the most diverse states in the nation, and our region is uniquely rooted in iron mining, forestry, tourism, and emerging resource development. These industries are not simply economic drivers — they are the foundation of our communities and our way of life. They allow our residents to live, work, and recreate within the region we call home.

Our communities have long supported this state and nation through our workforce, natural resources, and strong civic commitment. Northeastern Minnesota has always answered the call — through our workforce, our resources, and our deep sense of responsibility to the nation and to one another.

Northeastern Minnesota has unique economic and geographic characteristics that differ from other parts of the state. But as lifelong residents of this region, we know these industries, these lands, and these communities better than anyone.

We have balanced environmental stewardship with responsible resource development successfully in the past, and we will continue to do so into the future. Creating responsible, science- and fact-based legislation is paramount to the survival of our regional economy and Minnesota's long-term strength.

As mayors, we are asking for responsible, fiscally prudent leadership that recognizes the essential role cities play and the fiscal pressures we manage on the front lines of governance.

Many Minnesota cities are confronting significant property tax levy pressures. As mayors, we want to limit levy increases wherever possible, and Local Government Aid remains an essential component in helping communities manage costs while maintaining the services residents rely on.

At the same time, unfunded mandates and shifting responsibilities make it increasingly difficult for cities to balance budgets without passing additional burdens on to homeowners and businesses. This growing disparity between state fiscal decisions and local realities is unsustainable.

We seek responsible mining and development processes that are based not only on facts and science but also led by 21st-century technology. Our legislative priorities reflect this commitment and guide our decision-making in the industries of iron mining, precious metals, and helium extraction.

Our shared legislative priorities include:

- **Local Government Aid (LGA)**
- **Capital Investment (Bonding)** for water, sanitary sewer, roads and bridges, and lead service line replacement
- **Emergency Medical Services support and rural hospital stability**
- **Economic Development** through housing and workforce initiatives
- **Critical minerals and helium resource development**
- **Iron mining and forestry support**
- **Regulatory and environmental permitting reform** that enables responsible mining and sustainable growth

We extend our sincere appreciation to all the public officials who continue to advocate for fiscal discipline, pro-growth policies, and local government stability. Your work does not go unnoticed.

Thank you for your attention to these priorities and for your service to the people of Minnesota. We look forward to working with you to ensure that Northeastern Minnesota remains strong, resilient, and positioned for a prosperous future.

Respectfully,

The Undersigned Mayors
Iron Range Mayors
Northeastern Minnesota