



2017 Greater Minnesota Partnership Policy Positions

To help improve the economic climate and boost economic growth in Greater Minnesota, the GMNP supports the following economic development positions in the 2017 legislative session:

1. **Workforce Housing**

The GMNP supports programs to address the critical workforce housing shortage in Greater Minnesota. This includes increased funding for the DEED workforce housing grant program. The workforce housing tax credit should be the highest priority for tax cuts in the 2017 tax bill, and should be funded at least \$40 million over 6 years. The GMNP supports workforce housing programs that are administered by DEED, have restrictions on unit cost rather than income or population, and which are focused on economic development and middle-income workers in Greater Minnesota.

2. **Greater MN Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI) Grant Program**

The GMNP supports at least \$12 million in bonding and an increase in the general fund appropriation in the 2017 legislative session for the BDPI grant program. It should remain a stand-alone program open to only Greater Minnesota without earmarks to specific geographic areas or for specific projects. GMNP also supports a general fund appropriation for BDPI.

3. **Broadband Expansion**

The GMNP supports a \$100 million appropriation to the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program, as over half of the households in rural Minnesota lack access to broadband at the state speed goals. Federal broadband dollars fund new service below state speed goals, so it is not an adequate replacement for state broadband funding. The GMNP supports using grant funds for economic development. The GMNP opposes limitations on the distribution of grant dollars between unserved and underserved areas, and opposes challenge processes that give large providers power to determine that a community shouldn't receive a grant. The GMNP supports defining poorly-served areas as those that lack access to the level of service actually funded by the grant program (100 Mbps download / 100 Mbps upload).

4. **Statewide Business Property Taxes**

The state should exempt the first \$150,000 of commercial/industrial value in Greater Minnesota from the statewide business property tax, without shifting the cost to other property.

5. **Transportation**

The GMNP supports a comprehensive approach for transportation, which includes \$600 million a year for 10 years for highway maintenance and expansion. This includes \$200 million for Corridors of Commerce. The GMNP also supports an additional \$50 million for city streets. The GMNP supports a comprehensive approach to transportation, including surplus general fund dollars and new dedicated state revenues.

6. **Water Quality Regulation**

The GMNP supports requiring cost-benefit analysis of new or amended water quality regulations that impact our communities, before they are adopted; supports requiring independent scientific peer review of regulations that will impose excessive costs on communities; supports requiring site specific analysis when translating standards into permit requirements; and supports preventing the enforcement of unadopted rules.

7. **Bonding and Infrastructure in Greater Minnesota**

Bonding bills should focus on local roads and bridges, wastewater, and other infrastructure that grows local economies in Greater Minnesota. In addition, of projects identified as being located in the metro area or Greater Minnesota, at least 50% of all capital investment funding should be directed at Greater Minnesota.

8. **Greater Minnesota Job Training Incentive Program**

The GMNP supports the Job Training Incentive Program and any necessary updates to make it more responsive to the needs of Greater Minnesota employers. The program should have an ongoing base budget of at least \$2 million annually.

9. **Local Government Aid ("LGA")**

The GMNP supports restoring the LGA program to its 2002 funding level and annual increases in its appropriation thereafter. LGA helps Greater Minnesota businesses receive needed city services while restraining local property taxes.

10. **Restore Funding For MIF and the Job Creation Fund**

The GMNP supports restoring funding for both the Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) and the Job Creation Fund and language changes to ensure a more balanced distribution of funding between the metro area and Greater Minnesota.