



Senator Warren Limmer, Chairman
Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Room 3221, Minnesota Senate Bldg.
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Limmer and Members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee:

I'm writing on behalf of Minnesota Rural Counties and its 35 member counties in support of SF534, which provides base funding to assist local emergency management planning efforts to meet state readiness guidelines.

Securing base funding for this program has been an MRC priority since 2019, as federal funding became less reliable and local property tax base proved insufficient to address local planning needs and statutory requirements. Local emergency managers have performed exemplary on shoe-string budgets through additional unforeseen COVID-related public health and safety responsibilities, but very few are able to meet readiness requirements.

In a survey conducted in mid-March, 2021, a full 92% of local emergency managers responded "No" to the following question:

"Is the Emergency Management program in your County, City of the First Class or Tribal Nation funded to the level necessary to adequately carry out Federal and State required services?"

All local governments must meet the same requirements regardless of the size of their budgets, placing a particular hardship on rural entities. Our smallest and poorest units of government desire to provide their citizens the same level of preparedness as the largest and wealthiest communities, but there is no equity in funding and staffing to ensure this goal is achieved.

We appreciate Senator Weber's efforts to bring relief to this critical local emergency management funding shortfall and urge the committee to support SF534.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background, appearing to read 'Dan Larson'.

Dan Larson, Executive Director
MN Rural Counties
612-210-2493

*Aitkin / Becker / Big Stone / Clay / Cottonwood / Douglas / Grant / Hubbard / Kittson / Koochiching
Lake of the Woods / Lincoln / Mahnomon / Marshall / Meeker / McLeod / Meeker / Mille Lacs / Mower / Nobles / Norman
Pennington / Pipestone / Polk / Pope / Red Lake / Redwood / Roseau / Stevens / Todd / Traverse / Wadena / Watonwan
Wilkin / Wright*