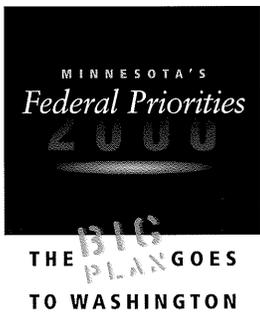


THE **BIG** PLAN GOES
TO WASHINGTON



For more information about Minnesota's Federal Priorities, contact:

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Upon request, this information will be made available in an alternate format,
such as Braille, large print or audiotape.

February 2000

Our Vision for a State/Federal Partnership

The Ventura Administration envisions Minnesota as the best place to grow a business, the best place to retire, the best place to raise a family, the best place to immigrate, the best place to farm, the best place to vacation and conference, and the best place to live. We believe that a healthy, honest and better-defined relationship with the federal government will help us achieve our goals. The state/federal relationship is most effective for Minnesota when:

Solutions are kept close to home.

The most important principle of representative governance is to put the maximum authority for serving people in the hands of local elected leaders such as school boards, city councils, and county boards. Just as the Ventura Administration strives to align with local units of government, so should the federal government recognize when the state has a better ability to govern than the federal government.

Federal mandates are fully funded.

When federal mandates meet the goal of assuring equality to citizens in every state, they are necessary. When they infringe on governance that is more appropriate for local and state governments, they are unnecessary. In every case, mandates should be fully funded.

Rules and regulations are fair and warranted.

The Ventura Administration operates under the belief that the executive branch should not legislate through rule writing. So, too, should federal rules and regulations stay true to congressional intent.

continued

Budgets are honest and free from gimmicks.

We have an obligation to renew Minnesotans' faith in government through honesty and openness in the government process, especially when it comes to truth in budgeting.

Incentives, not penalties, drive innovation.

Minnesota is home to many top-notch, forward-thinking policy-makers. When we move ahead of the rest of the country and enact health care, agriculture or education policy that leaps ahead of federal policy, the state should not be penalized down the road.

*The Ventura Administration outlined its direction and goals in what we call **The Big Plan**. The following pages list our federal priorities in terms of **The Big Plan** initiatives. These priorities listed are just a sample of the many ways the federal government interacts with the state.*

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B I G
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TO WASHINGTON**

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Healthy, Vital Communities

The Best K-12 Public Education in the Nation

The Ventura Administration urges the 106th Congress to fully fund 40 percent of the cost of serving students with disabilities, and urges the U.S. Department of Education to reduce its share of the special education paperwork burden.

The Ventura Administration strongly believes that it is the state's foremost responsibility to provide every child in Minnesota with the best student achievement opportunities possible in a world-class public education system. The greatest barrier to this goal is one that affects every classroom: failure of the federal government to fully-fund mandated special education. The federal government currently provides only one-sixth of the originally promised 40 percent obligation toward the cost of serving eligible special needs students. In addition, the piles of special education paperwork required by both the state and federal government overburden Minnesota's special education teachers. We are facing a crisis – more and more special education teachers are retiring while fewer and fewer college graduates choose the special education field. We cannot attract teachers to this field if we continue to expect them to act as accountants. Minnesota is doing its share with reforms that work for kids. This Congress can achieve a legacy by boldly redirecting federal funding to this critically important obligation at long last.

Commissioner Christine Jax, Department of Children, Families and Learning

Improving the Competitive Position of Rural Minnesota

The Ventura Administration, led by the Farm and Rural Minnesota (FARM) Cabinet, asks Congress to reduce the regulatory burden on Minnesota's farmers, open more markets for Minnesota's agricultural products, and work to strengthen the infrastructure of rural Minnesota.

While much of the American economy flourishes and Wall Street posts record gains, the rural countryside is in economic distress. No individual state government, including Minnesota, can act to buffer the pressures of low commodity prices, unfair trade policies and adverse weather on our farmers and their agri-business partners. With yet another farm crisis affecting parts of the Minnesota economy, it is time to loudly advocate that agriculture move to the top of the federal agenda. The Ventura Administration vows to work with the Minnesota congressional delegation to look for long-term solutions to bolster rural economies. Foremost among these goals must be access to new export markets, reform of risk management programs and the end of policies that favor one part of the country over another. We also need to end dueling federal policies that prohibit agriculture from growing industrial hemp. At the same time, investments in rural communities should be about basic infrastructure that benefits everyone: high-speed Internet access, affordable health care and solid schools.

Commissioner Gene Hugoson, Department of Agriculture and the FARM Cabinet

Light Rail Transit

The Ventura Administration appreciates the Minnesota congressional delegation's continued support for federal funding for light rail transit and urges support for Minnesota's application for a full funding grant agreement from the Federal Transit Administration.

For nearly three decades, Minnesota has been planning for light rail and an era when our citizens will be far less dependent upon individual vehicles for transportation. In 1999, with congestion at intolerable levels, action was taken to complete the funding package begun under Governor Arne Carlson's administration to construct the first leg of a metro-wide system of light rail, commuter rail and transit corridors. The goal is clean, efficient, safe, convenient, accessible, quiet, and affordable transportation from downtown Minneapolis through the international airport to the Mall of America in Bloomington. It will offer Minnesotans a fast connection to jobs, parks, shopping, and entertainment and put the word "free" back in our freeways for the movement of people and goods without delays. Already an impressive slate of development is underway along the corridor, revitalizing neighborhoods and the downtown district.

Commissioner El Tinklenberg and Chair Ted Mondale, Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council

Growing Smart in Minnesota

The Ventura Administration supports federal programs that help Minnesota grow smartly, and encourages Congress to grant Minnesota a two-year CREP extension.

Minnesota is growing and changing faster than it ever has before. It's time to consider how road construction impacts affordable housing decisions and the need for schools. It's time to consider how farming and urban development can co-exist, with habitat and wetlands in and among them. Federal support, including funding to restore "brownfield" sites and to clean up affordable housing can help Minnesota grow smartly. Programs like HUD Empowerment Zone funding to the City of Minneapolis and Community Development Block Grants to cities throughout the state have already started to blend environmental improvement with growth. Minnesota benefits from programs like the State Revolving Funds (SRF) and the National Biosolids Program, which help maintain and improve water quality throughout the state. In addition, enacting the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) will help Minnesota grow smartly by providing planning funds for identifying and protecting our natural resources, acquiring easements, improving habitat and restoring wetlands. Last but not least, important conservation programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) have helped Minnesota grow smartly and should be strengthened. Granting Minnesota a two-year CREP extension would allow the state to fully participate in this successful program.

Commissioner Al Garber and Chair Ted Mondale, Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council



Partnerships for Affordable Housing

The Ventura Administration urges the federal government to work in partnership with the State of Minnesota and local governments to aggressively develop affordable housing for Minnesota's communities.

A place to live is a basic human need. Children cannot flourish and adults cannot feel safe or self-sufficient without it. Neighborhoods and communities without available, affordable housing are neither healthy nor vital. Housing shortages dot the map from urban cities to rural townships despite the State of Minnesota's efforts to address the problems. Unfortunately, the federal government has become less and less a true partner in the production of affordable housing by terminating project-based assistance programs, ending Internal Revenue Service code incentives for owners to produce low-income housing, and limiting the amount of tax-exempt bonds that may be issued for housing. Today, owners have few incentives to accept vouchers and certificates. These factors have led to a bona fide housing crisis. The rate of homelessness in Minnesota is too high, even among women, children and working people. Rent increasingly consumes more than 50 percent of a family's income. Owners are unable to adequately maintain properties within the rent limits set by the government. They find it more profitable to abandon assistance programs than to continue to lose money. In February 2000, Governor Ventura announced a landmark initiative to invest a majority of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) surplus funds in housing for families. Congress must join the state in addressing this public housing crisis, and return to being a meaningful player in the production of affordable housing.

Commissioner Kit Hadley, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency

Moving Minnesota: Multimodal Transportation Statewide

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to continue to support important transit services that serve all of Minnesota and to provide federal funding for passenger rail service to develop the Midwest Regional Rail Corridor.

The Ventura Administration supports aligning transportation investments with land use, jobs and housing to support smart growth principles. Responding to the challenges of future congestion and urban growth, the Ventura Administration proposed a state funding strategy that focuses on the ABCs of transportation: Advantages for transit, Bottleneck removal and Corridor connections. Federal funding for key transportation initiatives will help Minnesota implement county-wide transit services including an expanded bus system and light and commuter rail lines. In addition, the Midwest region is in need of a passenger rail system that will bring people from urban center to urban center. Federal funding for the Midwest Regional Rail Corridor linking the Twin Cities to other regional Midwest economic centers, must be part of our long-term transportation strategy.

Commissioner El Tinklenberg and Chair Ted Mondale, Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council



Telecommunications as Economic Development

The Ventura Administration supports federal actions that advance the transition of telecommunications from a noncompetitive regulatory environment to a consumer-oriented, competitive marketplace.

The Ventura Administration is committed to ensuring that there is not a gap between technology "haves" and "have-nots" in this fast-changing global economy. The commitment is that high quality, fairly priced voice, data, and video transmission services and capabilities shall be available to every resident, business and government office of the state. Our citizens will benefit from a telecommunications initiative that changes 80-year-old laws with a sweeping reform. This reform replaces traditional command and control regulation with market competition, where appropriate; removes regulations that discourage fair competition; ensures that Minnesota regulations comply with the Federal Communications Act of 1996; encourages investment and competition throughout the state; establishes a state universal service program; moves costs from a ratepayer model to an open appropriation model; and provides consumer protection through education and information.

Commissioner Steve Minn, Department of Commerce

Living Human Rights and Respect

Every American is afforded inalienable rights under our Constitution and Bill of Rights regardless of race, age, gender, religion or sexual orientation. Such human rights should be afforded to Hmong veterans. The Ventura Administration urges the congressional leadership to hold hearings and pass the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act.

The next census will reveal a newly diverse population characterized by a wide range of races, cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles. Diversity is not something that will happen sometime off in the future. It is the best word to capture the total picture of life right now in urban, suburban, and rural communities across Minnesota. The Ventura Administration is committed to serving every citizen in the State of Minnesota equally, and will support federal legislation that helps us accomplish that goal. It is the unique role of the federal government to guard freedoms and ensure that all citizens, native and immigrant, are afforded an equal opportunity to pursue life, liberty and happiness without discrimination. The Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act, sponsored by Congressman Bruce Vento and Senator Paul Wellstone, will help Hmong patriots living in the United States obtain the same immigration status that has been extended to other foreign nationals. This bill waives the English language requirement and eases the civics requirement for Hmong patriots who served side by side with Americans in Laos.

Commissioner Janeen Rosas, Department of Human Rights



Reliable Energy and Consumer Choices

The Ventura Administration supports legislation that will provide a date certain for removing nuclear waste, and puts the nuclear waste funds in escrow while the waste is removed to either a temporary or permanent storage facility.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has violated federal law by not accepting spent nuclear waste from the nation's nuclear power plants. The nation's ratepayers have contributed more than \$16 billion to the nuclear waste fund since 1983. In fact, Minnesota ratepayers have contributed nearly \$300 million thus far. In recent legislation, DOE has agreed to "take title" of nuclear waste at the nation's nuclear plants. If this occurs, it is very likely that waste will be stored long term at nuclear power plants. The State of Minnesota is a founding member of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition, comprised primarily of state agencies, utilities and attorneys general working for a solution to the nuclear waste issue.

Commissioner Steve Minn, Department of Commerce

Ensuring an Information Highway that Leaves No Community Excluded

The Ventura Administration urges the 106th Congress to support opportunities to provide rural communities with access to Internet technology and to provide Minnesota with federal funding to integrate our information and data systems on a nationwide basis.

Implementation of a statewide high-speed voice, data and video network will give our local communities and local institutions of criminal justice, health care and learning access to resources and information currently out of their geographic reach. The Ventura Administration is leading a statewide effort to build an information highway that bridges the current "digital divide" between our urban and rural areas. Connecting Minnesota and other similar initiatives will enable communities to gain access to a high bandwidth network. The state is also working to integrate state data and information systems so that our various levels of government, including law enforcement agencies, can adequately communicate with each other. Federal support for both of these efforts is essential to ensure that our work in Minnesota is compatible with our neighboring states and the entire nation.

Commissioner David Fisher, Department of Administration



Self-Sufficient People

Transitioning from Welfare to Self-Sufficiency

The federal government must maintain its commitment to the federal-state partnership by fully funding the TANF block grant and maintaining flexibility in the administration of TANF funds.

Minnesota's welfare reform, the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) ranked first in the country during federal fiscal year 1998 for its success in helping people keep jobs and increase their earnings. Our commitment to self-sufficiency calls for creative efforts that help low-income families become truly independent through their own efforts, but with appropriate public support. As more recipients enter the workforce, we are faced with providing the very hard-to-employ populations with tools for success. It is imperative that the federal commitment to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) continues. Implementing good public policy requires us to think prudently about what happens should the economy turn. The State of Minnesota should not be forced to spend down TANF funds in the fear that Congress will reappropriate Minnesota's TANF dollars.

Commissioner Michael O'Keefe, Department of Human Services

A Health System for the Next 50 Years

Minnesota must be given the authority by HCFA to access its CHIP allotment. As Congress debates strengthening the Medicare program, any changes must involve eventually equalizing our Medicare reimbursement rates with the rest of the country and including a prescription drug benefit for low-income seniors.

Although Minnesota's health care system is nationally admired, it can and should be strengthened for the future. First, there are still too many uninsured Minnesotans, including approximately 50,000 children. The Ventura Administration is committed to insuring every child in Minnesota by the time Governor Ventura leaves office. To help Minnesota insure more children, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) should approve Minnesota's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) waiver in a timely fashion, before Congress reappropriates Minnesota's allotment. Secondly, Minnesota suffers from the lowest Medicare reimbursement rates in the country. Our providers, beneficiaries and entire health care delivery system suffer as a result. Medicare reform must provide a solution to this inequity. Finally, the Ventura Administration urges Congress to reform Medicare to include prescription drug coverage that will establish a federal funding source to help low-income seniors cope with the outrageous costs of prescription drugs.

Commissioners Michael O'Keefe and Jan Malcolm, Department of Human Services and Department of Health

Assuring Lifelong Learning for Work and Life

The State of Minnesota relies upon a strong commitment by the federal government to fund our land-grant universities, including a strong federal extension outreach system and a strong commitment to federal student financial aid.

Generations of Minnesotans have constructed and maintained a vast network of opportunities for informal and formal learning throughout life. The state that led the way for community education and early childhood education attached to the K-12 education system also built technical colleges, state colleges, a stellar land-grant university system, and supported some of the nation's finest private colleges. In addition, Minnesota's statewide system of WorkForce Centers provides a critical link between employers struggling to find and retain qualified workers in a time of near full employment and the workers who are interested in finding work or bettering their careers.

Governor's Office

Tobacco Settlement Endowments: Improving Health Status for All Minnesotans

The Ventura Administration supports permanent changes to the Synar law that standardizes the process for all states so that Minnesota's substance abuse block grant is not in jeopardy.

Recognizing that funds from the state's lawsuit against tobacco companies presented a once in a lifetime opportunity to better Minnesotans' health, Governor Ventura won the creation of two endowments to better the lives of future generations. The endowments, funded with one-time payments, will invest in a reduction of teen smoking, research, and medical education. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Minnesota is one of only five states in the nation that has committed adequate resources to address tobacco use. The Ventura Administration supports the spirit of the Synar law. However, the State of Minnesota has been unable to comply with the arbitrary Synar target rates issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These regulations need to be scrutinized by Congress so they do not continue to jeopardize an unrelated substance abuse block grant. The Synar law should be reformed to create incentives for states that are already making a strong financial commitment to reducing youth tobacco use and sales.

Commissioner Jan Malcolm, Department of Health

Service, Not Systems

Rein in Rulemaking and Excessive Regulation

The Ventura Administration urges timely approval of HCFA waivers and encourages our federal partners to rein in excessive federal regulation that often goes beyond congressional intent.

It is the Ventura Administration's desire to limit the size of state government, increase accountability and serve citizens responsibly and responsively. The federal government can do the same. Minnesota has experienced several Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) delays in the processing of waiver requests to the point where innovation and ideas from Minnesota languish and die in the hands of the federal bureaucracy. This unresponsiveness must be addressed. Similarly, the excessive regulations often proposed by various federal departments that go beyond congressional intent, and create unfunded mandates on the State of Minnesota, should be scrutinized.

Commissioner Michael O'Keefe, Department of Human Services

A Tax System that Makes Sense

The Ventura Administration supports reducing, reforming or just plain eliminating the federal estate tax. The Ventura Administration supports a solution to the Internet taxation issue that treats transactions of goods and services equally and is consistent with the tax treatment of other telecommunications services.

After listening to taxpayers to identify reforms that make sense from their point of view, the Ventura Administration has begun a reform of Minnesota's tax system to make it simpler and easier for taxpayers to understand. This reform includes recommending changes in policies that currently discourage taxpayers from doing what's right for them as individuals and for their communities. One example is the federal estate tax. Tax policy should encourage work, saving, thrift and intergenerational savings, but federal estate taxes can force owners of farms and family businesses to sell them instead of handing them down. Because Minnesotans who pay Minnesota estate tax are allowed a credit against their federal estate tax, the State of Minnesota cannot reform its estate tax without reform at the federal level. Another federal tax issue of increasing importance concerns commerce conducted over the Internet. The legal framework that governs these transactions should reflect consistent principles across state, national and international boundaries, and should align with long-term deregulation of the telecommunications industry. This policy should minimize burdens on consumers, vendors, interstate commerce, and should not hinder use of or access to the Internet. Finally, the confidentiality and security of information submitted by consumers must be assured. Both taxpayers and the states need an understandable, fair and predictable regulatory and tax environment, regardless of where or how a transaction takes place.

Commissioners Matt Smith and David Fisher, Departments of Revenue and Administration

Active, Engaged Citizens

The Ventura Administration supports nationwide same-day voter registration legislation (H.R. 2864) and encourages the entire Minnesota Congressional delegation to stand behind this bill.

Citizen involvement is critical to our representative democracy, and voting is the most basic measure of citizen involvement. Communities in the State of Minnesota are as close to a model for citizen participation as we have in this country, where democracy flourishes and voting is common. But we still should do more to ensure that more Minnesotans are involved and vote. We can also continue to be a national model, illustrating how to improve citizen involvement. Elected officials are responsible for creating an open and fair system of voting. With bipartisan courage, Congress and the federal government can improve citizen participation and rebuild trust between elected officials and citizens.

Governor's Office

Reforming "Politics as Usual"

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to put partisan politics aside and pass nonpartisan campaign finance reform.

Today's political campaigns are too often about power and money. Campaign spending is spiraling out of control, as candidates squander outrageous amounts of money to sell their packaged ideas to voters. If we hope to re-engage citizens in our political process, we must limit the influence of special interests in campaigns, level the playing field between challengers and incumbents, and focus on issues that matter to Minnesotans. Campaign finance reform must return to the top of the agenda in Washington.

Governor's Office

Electronic Government Services Initiative

The Ventura Administration urges the federal government to work in conjunction with the State of Minnesota on providing integrated online government services.

A government too complex, too mysterious, is also too inaccessible. In order to implement government reforms in the spirit of rebuilding Minnesotans' trust in government, the Ventura Administration is working to simplify government services and provide contact with government via technology improvements. Citizens should be able to communicate with and participate in their government with ease. The State of Minnesota is working to provide citizens with greater online access to state government services. In order to streamline government systems, state and federal governments should be using common tools and common networks to communicate government services to citizens.

Commissioner David Fisher, Department of Administration

Minnesota: World Competitor

Trade: Tapping the World's Interest in Minnesota

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to open markets around the globe and permanently normalize trade relations with China.

The Ventura Administration is committed to showcasing and promoting what Minnesota has to offer the world. The Governor's "World Plan" provides a country-by-country strategic analysis to ensure that state resources are effectively focused on the countries that have the greatest potential for improving Minnesota's exports: Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Southeast Asia and the United Kingdom. Minnesota's exports to these eight largest markets account for 70 percent of the state's manufactured exports, and exports to these countries are projected to grow by \$2.9 billion during the next five years. Minnesota's target industries, agricultural commodities, information technology, medical products and processed foods together represent almost three-fourths of agriculture and manufactured exports. Continued growth in these and other markets and industries is essential to Minnesota's export success.

Commissioner Gerald Carlson, Department of Trade and Economic Development

Agriculture: Competitive Anywhere in the World

The Ventura Administration encourages Congress to pass fast-track trade negotiating authority, permanently normalize trade with China, and eliminate the current ban on interstate shipment of state inspected meats.

As state and federal policy makers from one of the most productive agriculture states in the nation, we must work together to make Minnesota agriculture competitive in the global economy. We need to work to level the playing fields in both international trade and national farm policies so that our farmers and agri-businesses can compete in a fair, competitive arena. This includes granting the President fast-track trade negotiating authority, opening markets in China and continuing dialogue to improve agricultural trade with Canada. We need to improve and increase marketing opportunities, both domestic and foreign, not only for our major commodities, but also for unique and specialty crops and products. This includes lifting the current ban on interstate shipment of state-inspected meats.

Commissioner Gene Hugoson, Department of Agriculture and the FARM Cabinet



Developing the Workforce for Tomorrow

The Ventura Administration urges Congress and the federal government to ensure better coordination in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, and to reform the financing and administration of the National Employment Security System.

Eight years of economic growth has done us a world of good. Minnesota's overall unemployment rate is lower than ever. But now we face a workforce shortage, which makes us less competitive in a global marketplace. The recently passed Workforce Investment Act, modeled on Minnesota's WorkForce Center System, created a framework for overhauling our job training system, focusing on helping job seekers get the right training and helping employers find the workers they need. While the goals of this law are laudable, there is a considerable lack of coordination among federal agencies in its implementation, an issue that must be addressed by Washington. In addition, Minnesota urges Congress to reform the Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA). The federal government charges Minnesota employers a federal unemployment tax, held in a trust fund. Beginning in the mid-1980s, Congress began to use surpluses from this trust fund to offset federal budget deficits. Minnesota's employers continue to pay out a total of \$35.4 million in a dedicated tax that is not used as it was intended. The State of Minnesota receives back less than half the money paid into these funds. The national employment security system must be reformed to change the distribution of these funds to the states and to eliminate the current 0.2 percent surcharge.

Commissioner Earl Wilson, Department of Economic Security

The Best Climate to Grow Business

The Ventura Administration advocates continued funding of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, and increased financial support for workforce development.

Minnesota is fortunate to have one of the strongest economies in the United States. For the past five years we have ranked at or near the top in a number of business climate indicators most notably our record low unemployment rate and overall economic development capacity. Minnesota has a diverse economy, a well-trained workforce and an above-average ratio of Fortune 500 companies. The federal government can reinforce Minnesota's economic vitality through continued funding of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Small Cities Development Program, a program that provides vital infrastructure and redevelopment funding to rehabilitate rural housing and commercial centers and provide the infrastructure for rural industrial development. Minnesota's business growth will also be stimulated through continued federal workforce partnerships with Minnesota's public education system.

Commissioner Gerald Carlson, Department of Trade and Economic Development

Commercialization of New Technologies

The Ventura Administration and the University of Minnesota urge the federal government to facilitate the successful transfer of research and technology from our state's major research institution to our business community.

The University of Minnesota is one of the premier research organizations in the United States. Research performed at the U of M has an important influence on our business community. The commercialization of new technologies and advances in science has spawned several healthy industries and small businesses in Minnesota, including the medical device industry, biotechnology enterprises and several value-added agricultural industries. The University of Minnesota is advancing its research in genomics, biomedicine and agribusiness. We should develop these ideas at home and have their commercialization contribute to Minnesota's economic vitality.

Commissioner Gerald Carlson and University Vice President Chris Maziar, Department of Trade and Economic Development and the University of Minnesota

Jesse "The Tourism Governor" Ventura: Promoting Minnesota, Promoting the Industry

The Ventura Administration urges the 106th Congress to eliminate barriers to tourism and to help promote Minnesota as the premier tourist destination that it is!

Minnesota is truly unique. We have a wealth of recreational and cultural attractions to promote across the state. Tourism is big business in Minnesota -- comparable to agriculture in its contribution to the gross state product. Tourism supports 177,000 jobs, provides \$4 billion in salaries and wages, and generates \$1 billion in tax receipts, resulting in an annual economic impact to the State of Minnesota of \$10 billion. Our federal partners can promote Minnesota's tourism industry by eliminating barriers to international travel and funding national tourism efforts, including the National Rural Tourism Foundation at the University of Minnesota. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to repeal the current border crossing system and make the Visa Waiver Pilot Program permanent. In addition, Congress should repeal the Passenger Services Act of 1886 to promote the development of the Great Lakes cruise industry. Federal support for Minnesota's transportation infrastructure, enhancements to our park and recreation areas and efforts that protect our precious natural resources will help keep Minnesota one of the most attractive destinations in the country.

Commissioner Gerald Carlson, Department of Trade and Economic Development

DEPARTMENT OF

Administration

David Fisher was appointed commissioner of the Department of Administration by Governor Ventura in March 1999. Before his appointment, he served as vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary of ADC Telecommunications of Minnetonka. Fisher also spent 15 years at Pillsbury, serving for five of those years as vice president and associate general counsel. Fisher has a bachelor of arts in history, biology and chemistry from the University of Minnesota, and a law degree from Washburn University School of Law in Topeka, Kansas.

**Commissioner David Fisher
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The Department of Administration's mission is to improve the quality and productivity of Minnesota government by providing business management and administrative services, including electronic government services. With jobs as varied as maintaining government buildings and grounds, managing information technology resources, or devising technology policy to meet the needs of the new millennium, the Department of Administration's employees are customer-oriented. They are pledged to making government work better. Every day, the department expresses a belief that it can help bring government and citizens closer together and strengthen democracy by providing "service, not systems."

Building the Information Highway

Not all communities throughout the state have access, either actual or affordable, to advanced telecommunications services, placing these communities at a disadvantage in retaining as well as attracting industry. The Department of Administration urges Congress to work with state and local communities to help Minnesota's communities establish telecommunications plans and coordinate technology investment strategies with schools and libraries. The Department of Administration also urges support for Connecting Minnesota, a project that allows the private sector to place fiber optic infrastructure along almost 2,000 miles of interstate and state highways.

Criminal Justice Information System Integration

The State of Minnesota is currently assessing the need for statewide integration of its data systems. Included in this statewide assessment is the need for accurate and timely reporting, collection, analysis, management and sharing of offenders' criminal history information. The State of Minnesota, led by the departments of Public Safety, Administration and Corrections, urges Congress to help fund Minnesota's efforts to integrate this data to improve the safety of our citizens.

Data Privacy

The State of Minnesota has developed data privacy policies in areas such as government information, medical records and insurance. These policies focus largely on the individual's right to know when information is being maintained, the right to review records and know how they are used, the right to accuracy of information, and the right to consent to dissemination of information. The Department of Administration urges Congress to ensure that medical privacy bills, financial services and Internet security bills introduced in the 106th Congress are aligned with current data privacy policies of the State of Minnesota.

Telecommunications Reform

The Ventura Administration recently announced a telecommunications strategic initiative that will transition Minnesota from a noncompetitive regulatory environment to a consumer-oriented telecommunications marketplace. The Minnesota departments of Commerce and Administration urge Congress to ensure that any federal telecommunications activity helps Minnesota decrease rates for services, improve service quality, advance services to all parts of the state and increase consumer choice.

Uniform Construction Codes

Minnesota is recognized as a leader in the national effort to adopt single, nationwide construction codes. The Department of Administration urges Congress to work for the adoption of one set of compatible construction standards for the entire country.

Retained Earnings Calculations

Federal regulations regarding retained earnings do not allow for sufficient funds to meet the needs of state internal service fund activities. The reconciliation formula calculation and subsequent reimbursements to the federal government greatly impair the Department of Administration's ability to manage internal service fund operations and to purchase capital equipment on behalf of other state agencies. The Department of Administration urges Congress to work to reform the Office of Management and Budget's formula for retained earnings.

DEPARTMENT OF

Agriculture

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) promotes food products, protects consumers, provides information and assistance to Minnesota's farmers and protects our natural environment. MDA's vision focuses on both the agricultural producer and the consumer of food products. This is accomplished through protection and promotion of Minnesota's agricultural production, regulation and inspection of food products for both human and animal consumption and the promotion and development of economic opportunities for Minnesota agriculture and its products.

Governor Jesse Ventura appointed Gene Hugoson commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in January 1999. A southwestern Minnesota farmer from Martin County, Hugoson was first appointed as Agriculture commissioner in July 1995, after serving five terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

**Commissioner Gene Hugoson
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Interstate Dairy Compacts and Federal Milk Marketing Orders

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture supports the elimination of the Northeast Dairy Compact, opposes its expansion and opposes the creation of any other interstate dairy compacts that seek to hinder the free trade of dairy products. MDA also urges Congress to reform the milk marketing order system to provide fairness in milk pricing to dairy farmers in the Upper Midwest.

Conservation Reserve Program

MDA supports a moderate expansion of the Conservation Reserve Program that targets environmentally sensitive lands and at the same time is sensitive to the economic impact of taking large amounts of acreage out of production for long periods of time. MDA urges Congress to develop a three- to five-year program for counties that are close to exceeding the 25 percent acreage cap. Such a program should take land out of production for a shorter period of time than the current program in order to minimize the economic impact on ag-related businesses in these counties.

Environmental Regulation Compliance

MDA urges Congress to direct funds to the states in the form of block grants to help producers achieve compliance with emerging federal and state environmental regulations. New state rules regulating animal feedlot facilities in Minnesota, which are being driven primarily by federal water quality standards, will be tremendously costly for producers, particularly in a time of low profit margins. Block-granting federal program dollars would enable states to leverage their resources to assist producers in making the necessary environmental improvements to their operations.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)

MDA supports federal-state partnerships that leverage taxpayer dollars and provide further incentives for conservation efforts. The current CREP/RIM partnership has been successful and MDA supports its continuation. The State of Minnesota submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in October of 1996, anticipating approval by the fall of 1997. Unfortunately, USDA did not approve the program until February 1998 and subsequent technical discussions delayed the program's implementation. The Ventura Administration urges the congressional delegation to help Minnesota gain a one-year extension of our CREP agreement to enable the completion of this effort.

Federal Crop Insurance Reform

MDA supports reform of the federal crop insurance program to include adequate coverage for producers who have suffered multiyear losses. The crop insurance system should also provide opportunities for producers to buy increased coverage at affordable premiums and for private crop insurance providers to develop alternative insurance products.

Interstate Shipment of State-Inspected Meat

MDA urges Congress to lift the current ban on the shipment of state-inspected meat across state lines. Allowing Minnesota producers to ship state-inspected meat products across the country and overseas will provide new market opportunities for Minnesota agricultural products.

New Market Opportunities for Farmers

In order to help our farmers compete in this global marketplace, Congress should pursue new international market opportunities for producers. MDA supports legislation granting the president fast-track trade negotiating authority. MDA also supports China's entry into the World Trade Organization, as China represents enormous market potential for Minnesota producers.

Federal Estate Tax Reform

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Department of Revenue urge Congress to reform federal estate tax laws. The current federal estate tax system forces owners of family farms to sell their farm or business in order to pay taxes and places a perverse incentive on keeping family farms alive. The State of Minnesota cannot reform the estate tax system without a reform at the federal level.

DEPARTMENT OF

Children, Families & Learning

Governor Ventura appointed Christine Jax to lead the department on January 1999. Prior to her appointment, she was a professor of education at St. Mary's University. Her extensive experience in the field includes teaching and research at the College of Saint Catherine and the University of Minnesota; a Ph.D. in educational policy and a bachelor's degree in child psychology from the University of Minnesota; a master's degree in public administration from Hamline University; and teaching and administrative experience in various education and child care settings. In 1992, she founded a school for homeless children.

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The Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning works to help communities to measurably improve the well-being of children through programs that focus on education, community services, prevention, and the preparation of young people for the world of work. All department efforts emphasize the achievement of positive results for children and their families. Through the integration of its programs at the state level, the department encourages state education professionals and social services advocates to work together to meet the needs of Minnesota's children and families.

Full Funding for Special Education

The Ventura Administration strongly believes that it is the state's foremost responsibility to provide every child in Minnesota with the best student achievement opportunities possible in a world-class public education system. The greatest barrier to this goal is one that affects every classroom: failure of the federal government to fully-fund mandated special education. The federal government currently provides only one-sixth of the originally promised 40 percent obligation toward the cost of serving eligible special needs students. In addition, the piles of special education paperwork required by both the state and federal government overburden Minnesota's special education teachers. We are facing a crisis — more and more special education teachers are retiring while fewer and fewer college graduates choose the special education field. We cannot attract teachers to this field if we continue to expect them to act as accountants. Minnesota is doing its share with reforms that work for kids. This Congress can achieve a legacy by boldly redirecting federal funding to this critically important obligation at long last.

The Ventura Administration urges the 106th Congress to fully fund 40 percent of the cost of serving students with disabilities, and urges the U.S. Department of Education to reduce its share of the special education paperwork burden.

Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to reauthorize the ESEA in the 106th Congress while ensuring that any new mandates are fully funded. In this reauthorization, the Ventura Administration urges Congress to extend the date for final assessments to 2002-2003 school year, provide flexibility in the accountability provisions, and allow state education agencies to use adequate administrative and oversight resources to meet federal obligations. In addition, it is imperative that states are allowed to distribute federal entitlements according to alternative poverty data, as census data does not give a clear picture of the needs of Minnesota's school districts.

Charter Schools

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to establish a separate funding mechanism for children in charter schools, so that charter schools do not increase burdens on sponsoring school districts.

Reauthorization of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act

The Safe and Drug Free Schools funding provides more than \$6 million annually to Minnesota's schools and communities, helping them address violence and drug abuse at the local level. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to reauthorize this program and to provide as much flexibility as possible to local school districts.

Class Size Reduction

The Ventura Administration has invested significant state dollars into reducing class sizes in kindergarten through third grade. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to ensure that any federal dollars provided for class size reduction are flexible enough to meet the needs of all school districts in Minnesota.

School Breakfast Program Expansion

The Ventura Administration supports continued funding for the universal school breakfast pilot study and full funding for a universal-style school breakfast program.

Use of School Lunch Data

The Ventura Administration urges reform in federal laws to permit the use of economic indicator data to determine other education and health needs of children.

Child Care Costs

As more and more parents leave welfare rolls and join the workforce, the needs for child care increase. The Ventura Administration supports federal funding to support child care costs for low-income employed families.

Child Care Credits

The Ventura Administration supports reforms that make the federal child care tax credit a refundable tax credit. Currently, this benefit is only available to families with taxable income, leaving out families that make less than \$10 per hour.

Library Services and Technology Act

The Ventura Administration supports reauthorization of the Library Services and Technology Act to help Minnesota's state-based library programs.

DEPARTMENT OF

Commerce

Governor Jesse Ventura appointed Steve Minn to the Ventura Cabinet in February 1999. In September 1999, Governor Ventura directed by executive order the merger of the Commerce Department with the Department of Public Service, with Commissioner Minn at its head. Minn served on the Minneapolis City Council from 1994 until 1999. He was recognized as the council's expert on technology issues — including infrastructure, computer, cable and solid waste — and was frequently sought by industry representatives for his input on regulatory relief. Commissioner Minn has a bachelor of science degree from Syracuse University and a master of management from Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

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The Minnesota Department of Commerce serves the citizens of Minnesota by enforcing state laws and safeguarding consumers' rights and investments; resolving conflicts between consumers and industry; and enhancing the stability and strength of regulated industries in Minnesota. These goals, pursued in a professional manner, contribute to a fair and equitable marketplace. The Department of Commerce oversees Minnesota's regulated industries including banking, insurance, energy, telecommunications, securities, and real estate.

Nuclear Waste Disposal and Repository

The Minnesota Department of Commerce, working in conjunction with the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition, urges Congress to provide a long-awaited solution to the nuclear waste issue. The Department of Commerce also urges Congress to provide a date certain for removing nuclear waste from the nation's nuclear power plants; and to put the nuclear waste funds in escrow while the waste is removed to either a temporary or permanent storage facility.

Refund of Kansas Advalorem Taxes

The Minnesota Department of Commerce urges Congress to support the complete refund of Kansas "Advalorem" taxes due to Minnesota's consumers. Federal court has ordered Kansas pipelines to refund certain taxes originally charged to retail customers from 1983 until 1988, which will result in a refund to Minnesota's consumers of approximately \$15 million.

Telecommunications Reform

The Ventura Administration recently announced a telecommunications strategic initiative that will transition Minnesota from a noncompetitive regulatory environment to a consumer-oriented telecommunications marketplace. The Minnesota departments of Commerce and Administration urge Congress to ensure that any federal telecommunications activity helps Minnesota decrease rates for services, improve service quality, advance services to all parts of the state and increase consumer choice.

Electric Restructuring

Because electric utility industries are very complex and electric utility restructuring varies greatly from state to state, Minnesota does not support comprehensive federal action and urges Congress to leave the authority to restructure electric utilities to the states.

Renewable Energy Incentives

The State of Minnesota supports initiatives that broaden the state's energy mix away from traditional fossil fuels to renewable forms of energy such as wind, solar, biomass, hydro, or fuel cells. The federal government should encourage by direct incentives, tax credits or other mechanisms, the construction or operation of electric generation fueled by renewable energy sources.

Payday Lending

Payday loans are provided to individuals who have jobs and checking accounts and need additional cash fast. In Minnesota, payday lending is regulated as a short-term loan, limiting the fees that can be charged to customers. Although payday lenders would like to remove this restriction, the Department of Commerce opposes changing the short-term loan designation.

DEPARTMENT OF

Corrections

Sheryl Ramstad Hvass was appointed commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Corrections in February 1999. Previously, Ramstad Hvass was a law partner at Rider, Bennet, Egan & Arundel in Minneapolis. From 1982 to 1986, she was a judge of Hennepin County court. She was employed as an assistant U.S. attorney and an assistant Hennepin County public defender. Ramstad Hvass worked at the women's federal facility in West Virginia, and served on the board for Project Elan, a correctional program for female offenders. She was president of the Minnesota and Hennepin County bar associations and Minnesota Women Lawyers. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota in 1972 and a law degree from the University of North Dakota in 1975.

**Commissioner
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The Minnesota Department of Corrections mission is to contribute to a safer Minnesota by providing quality, cost-effective correctional services. As both a service and regulatory agency, the department has a broad scope of activities and responsibilities. The department's responsibilities include operation both the adult and juvenile state correctional facilities; provision of probation, supervised release and parole services; administration of the state community corrections act; and provision of assistance and guidance on a statewide basis in the management of criminal justice programs and facilities. The Department of Corrections currently operates 10 correctional facilities, including eight for adults and two for juveniles.

Social Security Act Title IV-E Funding

Title IV-E funding permits federal reimbursement to counties for costs of child foster care maintenance provided by approved facilities. Currently, only public agencies with less than 25 beds and licensed private agencies — both for-profit and non-profit — qualify as approved facilities. The Minnesota Department of Corrections juvenile facilities do not qualify for Title IV-E funding due to this bed restriction. The Department of Corrections urges Congress to raise the 25-bed limit for public facilities in order to provide a level playing field with private facilities and to assist Minnesota's counties in placing children based on their treatment needs rather than budget reimbursement issues.

Criminal Justice Information System Integration

The State of Minnesota is currently assessing the need for statewide integration of its data systems. Included in this statewide assessment is the need for accurate and timely reporting, collection, analysis, management and sharing of offenders' criminal history information. The State of Minnesota, led by the departments of Public Safety, Administration and Corrections, urges Congress to help fund Minnesota's efforts to integrate this data to improve the safety of our citizens.

Prison Industries Legislation

The Department of Corrections supports recent modifications to last year's prison industries legislation. The Department of Corrections wants to ensure that the legislation provides flexibility needed to operate prison industries and will continue to monitor prison industries proposals in the 106th Congress.

Violent Offender Incarceration and Truth-in-Sentencing Incentive Act

The Department of Corrections urges Congress to support continued federal funding to expand the number of prison beds. Since 1996, the department has received \$24.25 million, with up to 10 percent of its recent award available to be used for chemical dependency matters.

Other Important Sources of Funding

The Department of Corrections supports continued federal funding sources for various grants that help keep correctional facilities operating in Minnesota. These sources include: the State Criminal Alien Assistance Act; Literacy for Incarcerated Adults; Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners; Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants; National School Breakfast/Lunch Program; Byrne Grant; and the National Criminal History Improvement Program.

DEPARTMENT OF

Economic Security

Governor Ventura appointed Earl Wilson in February of 1999. Wilson served as Minnesota Department of Economic Security deputy commissioner from 1991 until 1999, after retiring with the rank of captain from a distinguished 30-year career in the United States Navy. He is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College; served three years on staff of the Chief of Naval Operations at the Pentagon; and ended his career as Navy Readiness commander for the Upper Midwest Region.

**Commissioner Earl Wilson
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The Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES) mission statement is "Helping people help themselves achieve economic security." The department has joined with other federal, state and local providers of employment and training services to create the nationally acclaimed WorkForce Center System. Over 50 centers across the state serve as "one-stop shops" for all employment and training needs. Partners to the WorkForce centers include Job Service, Unemployment Insurance, Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, Workforce Investment Councils (formerly called Job Training Partnership Act), and others, including counties and community action programs.

Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) Reform

Minnesota Department of Economic Security supports legislation to change the distribution of FUTA funds to the states and to eliminate the current 0.2 percent surcharge. Since the mid-1980s, Congress has used the surplus in these trust funds to offset federal budget deficits, while the State of Minnesota receives back less than half the money paid into these funds.

Alien Labor Certification (ALC) Backlog

MDES urges the U.S. Department of Labor to approve the State of Minnesota's current waiver request designed to help alleviate the current backlog in ALC processing. With Minnesota's unprecedented workforce shortage, applications for ALCs have more than doubled. The waiver would allow the State of Minnesota to charge a fee to employers for processing applications.

Workforce Investment Act Implementation (WIA)

Despite the goal of better coordination of the recent WIA, the State of Minnesota is experiencing insufficient coordination between federal agencies with programs affected by WIA. Additional coordination by federal agencies is needed to simplify and consolidate the burgeoning reporting requirements for the WIA.

Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

MDES supports the reauthorization of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, providing it gives states flexibility to target resources into the areas of prevention and enforcement.

Incentives for Braille Production

In order to provide an incentive for Braille production, MDES will support legislation to amend the federal Copyright Act to require publishers to include a nonvisual, electronic format version with every publication submitted to the Library of Congress for registration.

Reinstatement of Equitable Earnings Exemption for Blind Persons

MDES supports the Blind Persons' Earning Equity Act, which reinstates the policy of an identical earnings exemption threshold for blind persons and retirees.

DEPARTMENT OF

Health

Governor Ventura appointed Jan Malcolm as commissioner of the Department of Health in January 1999. Prior to her appointment, Malcolm was the vice president for public affairs at Allina Health System. From 1990 until 1994, she was senior vice president at HealthPartners. Malcolm also formulated health policy for several health care delivery systems, including PARTNERS National Health Plans of Dallas, American MedCenters, and MedCenters Health Plan. She started her health policy career at InterStudy, a nationally known research organization in Excelsior. Malcolm currently serves on the boards of the United Way of Minneapolis and the Minnesota Partnership for Action Against Tobacco, among others. Malcolm earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy and psychology from Dartmouth College in 1977.

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The Minnesota Department of Health is dedicated to the prevention of disease and disability, the protection of health, and the promotion of healthy behaviors and conditions that will lead to improved health for all Minnesotans. The Minnesota Department of Health watches for trends in health status and health threats so that it can identify potential roles, assess capacity to respond, and direct efforts where they are needed. The department operates programs in disease prevention and control, health promotion, community public health, health care policy and regulation of health care providers.

Medicare Reimbursement Rates

Because Minnesota has historically been efficient in its treatment of Medicare beneficiaries, Minnesota providers are paid a low monthly rate for Medicare beneficiaries who enroll in managed care. This current system puts our regions' seniors, taxpayers and providers at a disadvantage compared to those in less efficient regions of the country. The State of Minnesota urges Congress to enact changes to Medicare to equalize this regional imbalance. This fairness will allow for broader coverage of prescription drugs and other medical goods and services, ultimately enabling older Minnesotans to live more independently and self-sufficiently.

Patient Protection Legislation

The Minnesota Department of Health urges Congress to clarify provisions in the proposed patient protection legislation that affect states. There is a question regarding the definition of "group health plan" and "health insurance issuers." In addition, the pre-emption of state law is not clear. If the legislation provides a floor, giving states the ability to mandate additional requirements, the Minnesota Department of Health supports this legislation, currently in conference committee.

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

In health care today, the lack of drug coverage in any insurance plan is not practical. As more of our health care needs are managed with drugs, seniors more than anyone need drug coverage to maintain their health and prevent more costly services later. The Minnesota Department of Health urges Congress to add prescription drug coverage to the Medicare program to help seniors cope with the outrageous costs of prescription drugs.

Preventive Services Block Grant

The Preventive Services Block Grant provides essential support for numerous public health programs to improve the health of Minnesota residents. It is the only flexible source of federal funding that can be used to address Minnesota-specific needs. Congress reduced Minnesota's funding by approximately \$426,000 for fiscal year 2000. The Department of Health urges Congress to restore the cut to this important program.

Medical Education Funding

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 reduced Minnesota's medical education funding by approximately \$100 million for the period from 1998 through 2002. Minnesota's teaching hospitals were significantly impacted by this cut. The State of Minnesota has been supplementing the loss of federal funding through the tobacco settlement endowment, but

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teaching hospitals continue to suffer from the lack of federal funds. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to restore enough funds to ensure teaching hospitals have sufficient financial resources to continue their unique missions.

Critical Access Hospitals Program

Since 1983, Minnesota has experienced the closure of 31 small rural hospitals. In 1998, Congress appropriated \$25 million in funding to assist small rural hospitals in their conversion to a Critical Access Hospital model. The Minnesota Department of Health urges Congress to continue appropriations throughout the five-year duration of the Critical Access Hospitals Program. The department also strongly opposes any attempts to divert these funds to any other new program.

Effects of the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) on Rural Providers

Although Congress passed legislation in 1999 to provide assistance to health care providers inadvertently affected by the BBA of 1997, the restored funding was not enough to help rural providers, who are heavily dependent upon Medicare, and who had already experienced losses prior to the implementation of the BBA. The Department of Health urges Congress to consider additional assistance targeted to rural hospitals.

Funding for Health Statistical Analysis

Accurate health statistics are critical to determining the health status of our population as well as to design, provide and evaluate actions that will improve that status. The Department of Health urges Congress to maintain and enhance federal funding for health statistical analysis programs.

Importation of Foreign Cigarettes

Because foreign-made cigarettes are much cheaper compared to the same brand manufactured domestically, U.S. sales of foreign-made cigarettes are climbing rapidly. Foreign-made cigarettes, even those with names such as Marlboro or Camel, do not count toward manufacturers' market share. Therefore, their availability erodes the annual tobacco settlement payments manufacturers pay to Minnesota. The Minnesota departments of Health and Revenue urge Congress to regulate the importation of such cigarettes.

Mail Order Internet Cigarettes

It has become increasingly easy for individuals to purchase cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products through mail order or by placing orders over the Internet. The Jenkins Act is a federal law requiring cigarette vendors to report all sales to the taxing authority in the state of destination. Compliance with the Jenkins Act is very lax, and the State of Minnesota is powerless over businesses that have no presence in our state. Until adequate protections can be provided to eliminate the sale of tobacco products to minors, the Minnesota departments of Health and Revenue support restricting all sales of all tobacco products through the Internet and mail order. In the interim, the State of Minnesota urges the Federal Government to assist states by enforcing the Jenkins Act.

Medical Records Privacy

The 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act mandated the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop privacy regulations and standards that protect the privacy of an individual's health information. The Minnesota Department of Health supports HHS' proposed regulations, which strike an appropriate balance in allowing for necessary and important use of the data while protecting the privacy of individuals.

MINNESOTA

Housing Finance Agency

Katherine G. "Kit" Hadley was appointed commissioner of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency in July 1994. Prior to that appointment, she served as a deputy commissioner and as the director of intergovernmental affairs at MHFA. From 1986 to 1989, Hadley was a staff attorney for the Legal Services Advocacy Project, engaged in legislative advocacy on a variety of housing, employment, public benefits, and juvenile court issues. From 1980 to 1986, she was a staff attorney at Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services specializing in employment and family law. Hadley has a bachelor of arts degree from Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts, and a law degree from the University of Minnesota.

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The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) addresses Minnesota's basic need for decent, safe, affordable housing, helping to build stronger communities throughout Minnesota. MHFA receives state and federal appropriations and offers homeownership and rental financing programs, focusing resources on low-income Minnesotans. MHFA also administers approximately \$65 million of federal project-based rental assistance for properties the agency financed.

The Affordable Housing Crisis

Minnesota is facing a bona fide housing crisis. The rate of homelessness in Minnesota is too high, even among women, children, and working people. Rent increasingly consumes more than 50 percent of a family's income. Owners are unable to adequately maintain their properties within the rent limitations set by the government, and many find it more profitable to abandon assistance programs than to continue to lose money. Families cannot find a place to rent, even with federal rental assistance. The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency urges Congress to immediately address this affordable housing crisis, and return to being a true partner in the production of affordable housing.

Housing Credit Program

The Housing Credit Program leverages significant private investment for the financing of affordable housing, and is the primary engine for rental housing construction and rehabilitation in the state. The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency urges Congress to include an increase in the housing credit cap in the next tax bill and to work for its passage.

Accelerate the Private Activity Bond Cap Increase

Private activity bonds not only leverage significant private investment for the financing of affordable homeownership and rental housing, but they also finance the growth of Minnesota's existing businesses and encourage new business development. Although Congress enacted an increase in the private activity bond cap, the increase was delayed and phased in over time. The MHFA urges Congress to implement an immediate increase in the private activity bond cap to \$75 per capita.

Repeal of the 10-Year Rule

When first-time homebuyers make monthly mortgage payments or repay their mortgages, MHFA recycles these payments into new loans. Most of MHFA's first-time homebuyer funds come from these recycled payments. An obscure Internal Revenue Service provision, the ten-year rule, prevents issuers from recycling payments into new loans after a certain period of time. Consequently, MHFA predicts that first-time homebuyer activity in Minnesota will decrease in the years ahead. MHFA urges Congress to eliminate the 10-year rule.

Preservation of Federally Assisted Housing

In Minnesota's current tight rental market, the potential to significantly increase rents entices owners to cancel their participation in federal assistance programs. Thus, the availability of federally assisted housing is decreasing in Minnesota. The Ventura Administration has provided a substantial state investment in the preservation of federally assisted housing in Minnesota, and federal funding would greatly supplement the state's preservation efforts. MHFA urges Congress to enact legislation that removes barriers and provides adequate resources to preserve assisted housing at risk of being lost through either conversion to market rents or contract cancellation.

Affordable Housing in Greater Minnesota

Two block grants, HOME and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) are the backbone for rehabilitation programs of owner-occupied and rental housing in Greater Minnesota. These block grants have seen nominal funding-level increases in recent years. MHFA urges Congress to maintain level appropriations for HOME and CDBG.

Additional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Communities

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) proposed creating additional CDBG entitlement communities, mostly suburban cities, which would receive funds directly from HUD. MHFA opposes this proposal on two accounts. First, it would reduce funding for Greater Minnesota, where there are long waiting lists of communities who need housing funds. Secondly, this proposal would undermine the State of Minnesota's ability to take a regional approach to community development, affordable housing or homeless policy. MHFA urges Congress to oppose the creation of additional entitlement communities that will divert affordable housing funding away from communities most in need.

Governor Jesse Ventura appointed Michael O'Keefe to lead the Minnesota Department of Human Services in January 1999. Prior to his appointment, O'Keefe served as executive vice president of the McKnight Foundation, Minnesota's largest foundation. O'Keefe was president of the Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education and has held executive positions at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare; and the University of Illinois. A native of St. Cloud, he has a master's degree in nuclear physics from the University of Pittsburgh and an honorary doctorate from Hamline University. He has been a University of Minnesota Regent since 1996.

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DEPARTMENT OF

Human Services

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) mission is to provide health care, economic assistance and social services to Minnesotans whose personal or family resources are inadequate to meet their basic human needs. The department's wide-reaching charge includes health care, family and children's services, economic self-sufficiency, community mental health services and state psychiatric hospitals, as well as services to the elderly. The department promotes the dignity, safety and rights of the individual and ensures public accountability and trust through responsible use of available resources.

REACHING OUR HEALTH CARE GOALS

Medicare Reimbursement Rates

Because Minnesota has historically been efficient in its treatment of Medicare beneficiaries, Minnesota providers are paid a low monthly rate for Medicare beneficiaries who enroll in managed care. This current system puts our regions' seniors, taxpayers and providers at a disadvantage compared to those in less efficient regions of the country. The Department of Human Services urges Congress to enact changes to Medicare to equalize this regional imbalance.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Minnesota is locked out of the Children's Health Insurance Program because it acted early and responsibly to provide health coverage to uninsured children through the MinnesotaCare program. Despite the success of MinnesotaCare, there are still 40,000 to 50,000 low-income, uninsured children in Minnesota. DHS urges the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) to approve a waiver giving Minnesota access to its CHIP allotment.

Synar Law and Regulations

Despite the State of Minnesota's strong commitment to reducing teen smoking and access to tobacco, Minnesota is out of compliance with federal Synar regulations. While the Ventura Administration strongly supports the spirit of the Synar law to reduce teens' access to tobacco, Congress must ensure that Synar compliance regulations truly reflect the states' commitment and success to tobacco prevention and control. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to enact permanent changes to the Synar law that standardize the process for all states so that Minnesota's Substance Abuse Block Grant is no longer in jeopardy.

HELPING ALL MINNESOTANS BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The State of Minnesota opposes any attempts to tamper with Minnesota's TANF block grant allocation, either legislatively or administratively. The funding level, flexibility and transferability provided to states must be maintained so that Minnesota can continue its progress helping all Minnesotans become more self-sufficient.

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Child Support

DHS supports adequate federal funding for the child support program. Minnesota also supports federal legislation that allows states to pass child support funds directly to all parents on Minnesota Family Investment Program.

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

Minnesota values the flexibility of the SSBG and strongly opposes any further attempts to cut funding or restrict the flexibility or transferability of the block grant. SSBG provides valuable county-level social services to a broad population of low-income, disabled and elderly Minnesotans.

Implementation of the Chaffee Program

DHS urges the U.S. Department of Human Services to provide flexibility in the regulations for the new Chaffee Foster Care Independence Program. Minnesota must be given the flexibility to serve those foster children most in need, in both rural and urban Minnesota.

Child Welfare Bill

DHS encourages passage of the Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act to provide more resources to the legal system to address child welfare permanency requirements.

BETTER SERVING ELDERLY MINNESOTANS

Home Health Services

Although some concerns of states and providers have been addressed by Congress, DHS urges Congress to further analyze and address the impacts of the new prospective payment system on dual eligible Medicare and Medicaid recipients and on Medicaid consumers who are predominately elderly or disabled.

Senior Assisted Living

DHS urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to better coordinate state and local affordable housing efforts with federal funding for the senior assisted-living program.

Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act

DHS urges the 106th Congress to reauthorize the Older Americans Act, a program that touches one out of every seven older Minnesotans, including the 20,000 who receive home delivered meals.

MINNESOTA AND THE HEALTH CARE FINANCING AGENCY (HCFA)

HCFA Response to Waiver Requests

In recent years, it has become very difficult for the State of Minnesota to amend existing Health Care Financing Administration waivers or to obtain approval for new waiver proposals. The Department of Human Services encourages Congress to implement time requirements on HCFA to ensure that innovative ideas do not languish in the waiver approval process.

Calculation of Cost-Neutrality by the Office of Management and Budget

When considering "cost-neutrality" provisions in waivers, HCFA and the Office of Management and Budget currently do not factor in savings to the Medicare program attributable to efforts in the Medicaid program. DHS urges Congress to improve the waiver process by encouraging HCFA to consider all relevant savings when processing waivers.

Americans with Disabilities Act

HCFA and the Department of Justice recently issued guidelines to states concerning compliance with the Olmstead decision in state Medicaid programs. DHS urges Congress to reconsider broader Medicaid financing in the context of the Olmstead case so that states can better comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Medicaid Funding of Special Education Costs

Federal law requires schools to bill Medicaid for special education costs. Some states may have used this requirement as an opportunity to over-bill Medicaid and fund other state initiatives. HCFA's recent reactions to these potential abuses have made it difficult for states like Minnesota that are complying with the law. The State of Minnesota has proposed to HCFA a set of simplified payment rates for school-based services, urging HCFA to approve the proposal and to clarify acceptable payment procedures.

Prescription Drug Coverage Waiver

Minnesota submitted a federal waiver request to the HCFA to allow us to expand eligibility of our Qualified Medicare Beneficiary program to raise the income eligibility level and add prescription drug coverage with a co-pay. DHS urges HCFA to approve Minnesota's prescription drug waiver. In addition, DHS urges Congress to consider prescription drug coverage legislation that will establish a federal funding source to help low-income seniors cope with high costs of prescription drugs.

UNFUNDED MANDATES AND POTENTIAL COST BURDENS

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Administration Costs

Funding to implement administrative changes mandated by HIPAA was not authorized this year, resulting in a significant unfunded mandate on the State of Minnesota. DHS urges Congress to correct this unfunded mandate.

Block Grants for Medicaid Administrative Costs

DHS opposes capping the open-ended funding for state administrative costs of operating the Medicaid program.

Technical Revisions to the Social Security Act

DHS urges Congress to pass legislation to streamline programs for the dually eligible beneficiaries.

Electronic Benefits Transfer Interoperability

DHS urges Congress to enact legislation that ensures electronic benefits transfer systems are compatible among states.

DEPARTMENT OF

Labor and Industry

Gretchen Maglich was appointed commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry on January 1999, by Governor Jesse Ventura. She has been with the Department of Labor and Industry since July 1995 where she held the positions of assistant commissioner of the Workers' Compensation Division and commissioner under the previous Carlson administration. Prior to her appointment as assistant commissioner, she held the position of assistant city manager in Maplewood, Minnesota, from 1990 to 1995. She has a master of arts degree in industrial relations and a bachelor of science degree in business administration from the University of Minnesota.

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The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry strives to promote a safe, efficient and productive work environment for Minnesota's workplaces. The Department of Labor and Industry is the regulatory agency responsible for compliance with workplace statutes and rules in Minnesota. Its customers are the state's 2.5 million workers and 150,000 employers. The department focuses on preventing workplace accidents and illness through consultation and compliance efforts, oversees the workers' compensation system for the state, certifies and monitors the state's registered apprenticeship program, monitors compliance with labor laws, and tests and licenses boiler and high pressure piping workers and equipment.

Funding for OSHA Programs

Safe workplaces are an integral part of Minnesota's thriving business climate. The State of Minnesota successfully operates its own OSHA compliance program. The stability of the Minnesota OSHA compliance program depends on consistent federal funding for both state and federal OSHA programs.

OSHA Ergonomics Regulation

Federal OSHA published a proposed Ergonomics Standard rule in November 1999. OSHA has received written comments, and formal hearings will occur in 2000. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry opposes congressional intervention that would curtail this standard-setting process.

Changes in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

President Clinton has issued a proposal which would allow unemployment insurance benefits to be used to pay for family and medical leave. As this debate continues, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Minnesota Department of Economic Security will monitor this issue and provide information on its effect on state parental leave laws.

Whistleblower Protections

As Congress debates whistleblower legislation, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry will monitor proposals and provide information. Minnesota OSHA conducts safety and health 11(c) discrimination investigations in Minnesota and any whistleblower protection legislation will affect the Department of Labor and Industry's investigations.

Minimum Wage

President Clinton and several legislative leaders have expressed their desire to increase the minimum wage during this session. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry will monitor this issue and provide information on its effect on Minnesota.

Metropolitan Council

Governor Jesse Ventura appointed Ted Mondale as Chair of the Metropolitan Council in February 1999. Mondale serves as vice president of strategic relations for Automatic Intuition. He is a former Minnesota state senator and candidate for governor. Mondale serves as a member of the Democratic Leadership Council, Public Policy Institute's New Economy Task Force and Alliance for Global Competitiveness. He is the author of the book, A New Commitment to Minnesota Families.

Chair Ted Mondale Metropolitan Council

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization in the seven-county Twin Cities area. The council advocates smart growth for vital communities and a competitive region. It runs the regional transit system, collects and treats wastewater, oversees surface and groundwater management, plans regional parks and administers funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families. Keeping the region economically competitive in the international marketplace is the goal of the Metropolitan Council. The council prepares long-range plans for the development of vital regional services — aviation, parks and open spaces, transportation, water quality and water management — and a big picture plan for how the region should grow in the future.

Growing Smart in Minnesota

Minnesota is growing and changing faster than it ever has before. The Ventura Administration, led by the Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council, urges Congress to consider the following federal programs that help Minnesota achieve the goal of growing smartly.

Light Rail Transit

In 1999, Congress provided \$17 million for the initial funding of light rail transit and transitway improvements in the Twin Cities. The Hiawatha corridor is the first leg of a planned network of light rail, commuter rail and transit corridors to serve the future growth of the Twin Cities. The Ventura Administration, led by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council, urges support for continued federal funding for Hiawatha light rail transit and for Minnesota's full funding grant agreement application from the Federal Transit Administration.

Affordable Housing Programs

Adequate affordable housing in our urban areas will guide the growth of our metro area. Minnesota's metro areas currently suffer from a regional housing shortfall. The Ventura Administration, led by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, urges Congress to provide additional federal matching funds for affordable housing production and preservation to states and local units of government.

Brownfield Pilot Programs

The Twin Cities metropolitan area benefits from the Environmental Protection Agency's brownfield pilot programs, helping restore industrial sites and revitalize areas with historic infrastructure in a way that is complementary to smart growth. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to authorize funding for cleanup as well as site investigation activities in these pilot programs.

Blending Environmental Improvement and Development

The Ventura Administration urges continued federal support for programs like the HUD Empowerment Zones and Community Development Block Grants. Both of these programs help revitalize core areas and minimize sprawl.

Wastewater and Stormwater Funding

Minnesota benefits from programs like the State Revolving Funds and the National Biosolids Program, which help maintain and improve water quality throughout the state and in the metro area. The Ventura Administration urges continued federal support for these important programs.

Geospatial (GIS) Data Sharing

The Ventura Administration urges the federal government to maintain funding through the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) to help cities and counties use GIS data to evaluate growth decisions.

DEPARTMENT OF

Military Affairs

General Andreotti joined the Minnesota Air National Guard's 133rd Airlift Wing in 1965. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1966 and completed undergraduate pilot training at Laughlin AFB, Texas in 1969. His military duties have included squadron training officer, squadron mobility officer, squadron operations officer and wing safety officer. He commanded the 133rd Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron from 1985 to 1986, and was serving as the 133rd Airlift Wing's Deputy Commander for Maintenance when he was appointed adjutant general. He is also a rated pilot with more than 4,500 hours flying in various civilian and military aircraft.

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The Minnesota Department of Military Affairs is the headquarters of the Minnesota Army and Air National Guard, whose mission is to recruit and train a military force capable of accomplishing federal, state and community missions. Within the state, the 12,000 members of the Minnesota National Guard are available to support law enforcement agencies during natural disasters and other emergencies. The Minnesota National Guard has a sizable presence in 61 communities across the state, providing an extremely flexible response capability.

Phase II of the Combined Support Maintenance Shop (CSMS)

Since 1993, Minnesota has been requesting federal support for Phase II of the CSMS at Camp Ripley. The Phase I facility was completed in 1999, but support for Phase II has been delayed and will not be funded until 2003. The delay in Phase II has jeopardized the readiness and equipment maintenance capacity at Camp Ripley. The Department of Military Affairs urges Congress to support this project on schedule.

Mankato Training and Community Center (TACC)

Currently, the infantry battalion located in Mankato performs weekend drills in a substandard facility built in 1914. The Department of Military Affairs urges Congress to authorize this \$5.1 million project to provide a 46,000 square foot, 188-person training center that will enhance the Mankato community.

Military Construction (MILCON) Funds

Over the past decade, federal funding for MILCON has declined, while the missions of the Army National Guard have increased. The Department of Military Affairs urges Congress to authorize and appropriate additional military construction funding, bringing the funding level to a \$500 million level.

Real Property Operations and Maintenance (RPOM)

Real Property Operations and Maintenance accounts, used to repair and maintain the Guard's facilities, have declined in recent years. This decline has greatly affected the Guard's ability to maintain facilities. The Department of Military Affairs urges Congress to provide full funding for RPOM.

Improvements in Duluth

The 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth requires new aircraft and base improvements in order to remain a viable part of the Air National Guard. The Department of Military Affairs urges Congress to authorize improvements to the aircraft as well as funds for military construction for the Air National Guard in Duluth.

Minnesota Planning

Minnesota Planning provides timely information on critical issues to policy-makers and the public. Link to the agency's web site at www.mnplan.state.mn.us or contact an agency team listed below.

Dean Barkley was appointed director of Minnesota Planning in January 1999. A leader of the Minnesota Reform Party, Barkley ran for the U.S. House in 1992 and the U.S. Senate in 1994 and 1996. An attorney since 1977, he practiced law before coming to Minnesota Planning. He is also a director of the Minnesota Compact, which advocates clean campaigns, and has been a director of Common Cause, a nonprofit organization dedicated to open government.

Director Dean Barkley Minnesota Planning

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■ The State Demographic Center provides yearly estimates and long-range projections of Minnesota's population. County, city and township data is presented for households, the population and labor force. The center analyzes and distributes data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources. Call the center's helpline at (651) 296-2557.

■ The Land Management Information Center offers services to improve the effective use of geographic information in Minnesota. The center develops and integrates data and provides a single point of contact for geographic data. The center's online information system, Datanet, maps statistical information on social, economic and demographic trends in Minnesota. Call the Land Management Information Center at (651) 296-1212.

■ The Criminal Justice Statistics Center tracks a wide variety of data, covering crime, arrests, juvenile apprehensions and justice expenditures. It also conducts research and maintains databases for policy development. The center supports a helpline for local, state and national criminal justice information and statistics at (651) 296-4852.

■ The Critical Issues team equips policy-makers and citizens with in-depth information on emerging issues. Read the agency's electronic *IssueWatch*, a monthly newsletter on trends of interest to Minnesota. Gauge the well-being of Minnesota children through the *Children's Report Card*. For more information, call (651) 296-3985.

Other agency teams focus on environmental quality, municipal boundaries and local planning assistance.

Census 2000

As the state's liaison to the U.S. Census Bureau, Minnesota Planning currently is engaged in census promotion to ensure a full count when the census is taken in April 2000. Upon completion of the census, the agency will review census data and work with the Governor's office and the four legislative caucuses to redraw congressional and legislative district lines. Minnesota Planning is available to make presentations on the census and redistricting to members of Congress.

Geographic Information System Technology Funding

Minnesota Planning plays an important role in coordinating the state's development of geographic information technology. With help from the Governor's Council on Geographic Information, the agency monitors federal programs involving investments in geospatial data and technology, development of data standards, and legislation affecting geographic data. Continued funding to develop the National Spatial Data Infrastructure and the Nationwide Differential Global Positioning System is considered a high priority.

Before his appointment as commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, Allen Garber was the Champlin, Minnesota Chief of Police from November 1993 until February 1999. From 1968 until 1993, Garber worked as a special agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In 1992, Garber organized of the first Minnesota Fugitive Task Force, an organization that helped to locate and arrest more than 200 violent criminals.

Garber holds a political science degree from Rutgers University in New Jersey, and a master's degree in public administration from Mankato State University.

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DEPARTMENT OF

Natural Resources

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the diverse natural resources of the State of Minnesota. These include 16.65 million acres of forest land, 15,293 lakes, tens of thousands of miles of rivers, diverse game animals, prized game fish, rare plant and animal species, rich mineral deposits, 66 state parks, three state recreation areas and hundreds of areas for camping, hiking, snowmobiling, and other outdoor recreation. The DNR staff works in partnership with constituents to manage the state's ecosystems, with the vision that maintaining a sustainable quality of life is a shared responsibility of all citizens, as well as public and private organizations.

Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) and the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)

The DNR strongly urges the 106th Congress to pass CARA and CZMA. These bills would provide critical funding to protect the North Shore of Lake Superior, enhance Minnesota's parks and recreation areas, and manage our fish and wildlife resources.

Opposition to the Dakota Water Resources Act

The State of Minnesota opposes expansion of the costly Garrison Diversion project in North Dakota included in the Dakota Water Resources Act. This proposal is a huge diversion of Missouri River water to eastern North Dakota, and could result in significant negative environmental impacts to Minnesota waterways.

Flood Control Projects

The DNR urges support for several ongoing flood control studies and projects that need continued federal support. Large projects are underway in East Grand Forks, Crookston, Marshall and Stillwater; and smaller projects are underway in Ada, Breckenridge, Dawson, Granite Falls, Montevideo, Oakport Township and Warren. Federal funds are also currently used to help communities improve flood plain mapping and to aid in cooperative flood mitigation efforts in the Red River Valley Basin.

Water Resources Programs

Minnesota supports ongoing federal support for several water resource programs, including the U.S. Geological Survey's cooperative stream gauging program and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's national dam safety grant program.

Dam Rehabilitation

The DNR supports passage of H.R. 728, a bill to rehabilitate failing dams originally built under federal soil conservation programs. The DNR also supports modifying the bill to include dams originally built under federal work relief programs.

Mississippi River Navigation Expansion Study

The DNR supports navigation expansion legislation, as long as it contains additional tools for environmental restoration.

Fire Suppression in Northeastern Minnesota

Due to the July 1999 windstorms that flattened many acres of forestland, there is a strong likelihood of a wildfire reaching the Gunflint Corridor, in and adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Action by and coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service is necessary to reduce the potential risk from this wildfire.

Forestry Budget Issues

The DNR supports the recommendations from the National Research Council regarding supplemental funding initiatives seeking to reduce forest parcelization and threats to community forests from insects, disease and natural disasters.

School Trust Fund Land

There are nearly 100,000 acres of state School Trust Fund land in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). The DNR supports a combination of a federal buy-out and land exchange in order to acquire these lands and deposit revenue in the school trust funds. The DNR also supports the ability of the school trust to receive user fees revenue, proportionate to the state land portion of the BWCA.

Canadian Lynx Listing

The DNR opposes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife proposal to list the Canadian lynx as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Mining Reclamation Laws and Iron Range Reclamation Water Management

The DNR opposes legislation that would superimpose federal oversight of old abandoned mines and urges Congress to consider recommendation from the National Academy of Sciences regarding mining reclamation. The DNR would like to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a cooperative program to control and manage water that is accumulating in several abandoned mine pits in Northern Minnesota that could devastate downstream communities and natural resources.

Better America Bonds

The DNR supports the federal proposal to change the tax code to provide states, tribes and local communities zero-interest bonds to preserve and enhance open space, protect water quality and clean up brownfields.

MINNESOTA

Pollution Control Agency

Karen Studders was appointed commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency by Governor Jesse Ventura in March 1999. Studders has more than 20 years of experience in environmental and energy issues, including compliance and permitting, agency negotiations and complex environmental litigation. She spent most of her career in the private sector with Reliant Energy-Minnegasco, including several years as the director of environmental programs. She started her career at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Research Laboratory in Duluth, Minnesota. Studders has a bachelor's degree in chemistry with a biology minor from the College of St. Catherine and a law degree from William Mitchell College of Law.

Commissioner Karen Studders Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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The people of Minnesota have entrusted the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) with the protection of Minnesota's water, air and land. Toward that end, the MPCA strives to engage in partnerships with other stewards of Minnesota's environment. The MPCA works at being efficient, effective, flexible and creative in performing its mission of protecting the environment and serving the public. Its four main goals are: fishable and swimmable lakes and rivers; clean air; uncontaminated groundwater and land; and healthy ecosystems. In order to meet these goals, the MPCA operates state and federal programs in the areas of water quality, air quality, hazardous waste, solid waste, cleanup programs (such as Superfund), as well as programs that focus on pollution prevention.

Preventing Air Pollution

Because Minnesota meets federal air quality standards, the state is not eligible for federal funding aimed at eliminating air pollution. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to broaden the eligibility requirements and provide incentives to states to prevent air pollution, and to adjust federal formulas to recognize the benefits of mass transit and smart growth projects. The Ventura Administration supports all efforts to obtain federal funding for mass transit.

Animal Feedlots

The Ventura Administration generally supports the recent efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address environmental issues related to animal feedlots. However, additional funding is needed to address feedlot issues. We urge Congress to provide supplemental funding for state feedlot programs, and to establish a separate funding category under the State Revolving Fund to provide financial assistance to animal agriculture projects.

Environmental Innovation Flexibility for States

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to provide the EPA with authority to enter into agreements with states to test regulatory flexibility and innovation that results in improving environmental performance, and reducing administrative burdens on states and regulated parties (for example, moving from command and control to performance-based evaluations).

Reauthorization of the Clean Water Act

The State of Minnesota urges Congress to reauthorize the Clean Water Act and extend the duration of wastewater discharge permits from five to 10 years to allow for a more cost-effective use of limited staff resources within our water-rich state of 10,000-plus lakes.

Solid Waste Control/Interstate Commerce

The Ventura Administration urges congress to pass federal legislation that would give state and local governments the ability to control the flow of municipal solid waste through designation ordinances.

Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico

The MPCA is a member of a national task force advising the federal government on gulf hypoxia. There is currently a large area of the Gulf of Mexico that suffers from a lack of oxygen. Nutrients from agriculture from the Midwest are suspected as contributing to this hypoxia. The Ventura Administration urges our federal partners to ensure that this issue is addressed using the best available science and that its solution involves federal, state and local partnerships.

U.S. Geological Service (USGS) Stream Flow Gauging

The USGS provides critical information that the MPCA uses to calculate overall pollution loadings within Minnesota's basins and watersheds. This helps Minnesota monitor and control nonpoint source pollution. Funding of this important program is eroding; the Ventura Administration urges Congress to provide continued federal funding for USGS stream flow gauging.

U.S. Department of Defense Penalties

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to hold the U.S. Department of Defense accountable for the consequences of its actions (such as timely payment for environmental penalties) at its facilities.

DEPARTMENT OF

Public Safety

Charles R. "Charlie" Weaver was the first cabinet member appointed by Governor Jesse Ventura in December 1998. Weaver was a criminal prosecutor in Anoka County for seven years before serving in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1988 until 1998. He is a member of the Minnesota Special Olympics Board and a former member of the Anoka Rotary, the Minnesota American Red Cross Board, the Minnesota Justice Foundation, the Crime Victim Witness Advisory Council and the Anoka American Cancer Society Board. Weaver received a bachelor of science degree from the University of Oregon and a law degree from the University of Minnesota.

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The Minnesota Department of Public Safety coordinates and directs the functions and services of the state relating to the safety and convenience of its citizens. The department is an enforcement, licensing and services agency which develops and operates programs in the areas of law enforcement, traffic safety, alcohol and gambling, fire safety, driver and vehicle licensing, emergency management and public safety information.

Criminal Justice Information System Integration

The State of Minnesota is currently assessing the need for statewide integration of its data systems. Included in this statewide assessment is the need for accurate and timely reporting, collection, analysis, management and sharing of offenders' criminal history information. The State of Minnesota, led by the departments of Public Safety, Administration and Corrections, urges Congress to help fund Minnesota's efforts to integrate this data to improve the safety of our citizens.

Prevention and Management of Disasters

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety works collectively with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the management of declared disasters, and urges Congress to provide level funding for state and local emergency management programs and to avoid shifting the entire costs of disasters to state and local jurisdictions. Minnesota opposes changes to the Stafford Act that will prevent private nonprofit organizations from the public assistance program, a proposal that will have a devastating impact on our rural electrical coops and their customers. The department also urges FEMA to provide fairness to all citizens affected by disasters, regardless of state borders.

Potential Loss of Byrne Memorial Grant Funds

Minnesota currently stands to lose \$8.7 million because of noncompliance with guidelines affecting the Byrne Memorial Grant Funds. The Department of Public Safety urges Congress to limit guidelines on funding so that states can decide how to best match criminal justice policies with local needs.

Federal Highway Safety Program

The Department of Public Safety supports the continuation and expansion of the federal highway safety program and encourages Congress to implement incentive-based programs as opposed to sanction-based programs. In addition, there is a need for greater coordination and more timely distribution of grant funds affecting highway safety programs.

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws

The Department of Public Safety supports the continuation and expansion of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's program called Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws. These funds have supported Minnesota's local law enforcement efforts to reduce illegal sales of alcohol to minors.

Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act

The Department of Public Safety urges Congress to oppose the Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act. Any weakening of current asset forfeiture laws, one of the most effective weapons in the war against drugs, will benefit drug dealers and their criminal associates.

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program (HIDTA)

The Department of Public Safety urges Congress to continue funding HIDTA in the Office of National Drug Control Policy and to explore opportunities to expand Minnesota's role in addressing regional drug threats through this program.

State Regulation of Internet Gambling and Liquor Sales

The Department of Public Safety urges Congress to enable states to retain the authority to regulate both Internet gambling and Internet liquor sales and distribution.

DEPARTMENT OF

Revenue

The Minnesota Department of Revenue manages more than \$13.3 billion in revenue collected through a variety of taxes. The department also works with local governments in managing a \$4.7 billion property tax system. The vision of the department is to ensure that everyone is paying what is owed to the state, no more or no less; and that the revenue system is fair, efficient, reliable, competitive and understandable in structure and operation.

Matt Smith was appointed commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Revenue by Governor Jesse Ventura in January 1999. Prior to his appointment as commissioner, Smith served in the Department of Revenue for 12 years, most recently as deputy commissioner. He has a master's degree in agricultural economics and served as an economist with U.S. Department of Agriculture prior to joining the department.

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Reform of the Estate Tax

The federal estate tax imposes very large compliance costs on taxpayers and encourages individuals to spend rather than save. Minnesotans who pay Minnesota estate tax are allowed a credit against their federal estate tax. Therefore, the State of Minnesota cannot reform the estate tax system without a reform at the federal level. The Department of Revenue urges Congress to eliminate the federal estate tax, or reduce it by raising the unified credit allowed to offset the value of assets on which the tax is calculated.

Importation of Foreign Cigarettes

Because foreign-made cigarettes are much cheaper compared to the same brand manufactured domestically, U.S. sales of foreign-made cigarettes are climbing rapidly. Foreign-made cigarettes, even those with names such as Marlboro or Camel, do not count toward manufacturers' market share. Therefore, their availability erodes the annual tobacco settlement payments manufacturers pay to Minnesota. The Minnesota departments of Health and Revenue urge Congress to regulate the importation of such cigarettes.

Internet Taxation

The State of Minnesota supports the National Governors' Association proposal on Internet taxation whereby a trusted third-party vendor would use new software technology to ensure each state's sales taxes from Internet sales are properly collected. This proposal would make the tax system simpler and easier for taxpayers to understand.

Mail Order Internet Cigarettes

It has become increasingly easy for individuals to purchase cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products through mail order or by placing orders over the Internet. The Jenkins Act is a federal law requiring cigarette vendors to report all sales to the taxing authority in the state of destination. Compliance with the Jenkins Act is very lax, and the State of Minnesota is powerless over businesses that have no presence in our state. Until adequate protections can be provided to eliminate the sale of tobacco products to minors, the Minnesota departments of Health and Revenue support restricting all sales of all tobacco products through the Internet and mail order. In the interim, the State of Minnesota urges the federal government to assist states by enforcing the Jenkins Act.

Mobile Telecommunications Legislation

The Minnesota Department of Revenue supports proposed legislation that would assign all of a customer's wireless calls to a primary place of use. This proposal would make the tax system simpler and modernize the tax system to meet our needs in the next century.

Airport Improvement Program

Mn/DOT urges Congress to reauthorize the Airport Improvement Program. Several Minnesota airport improvements are on hold until action is taken.

Corridor Management

Corridor management is a tool Mn/DOT uses to guide future funding decisions, cooperatively establish management plans with local units of governments, and focus limited resources on improvements to the interregional corridor system. Mn/DOT urges Congress to support Minnesota's corridor management applications under the TEA-21 transportation, community and system preservation pilot program.

DEPARTMENT OF

Trade and Economic Development

Gerald "Jerry" Carlson was appointed commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development in January 1999. Shortly before his appointment, Carlson retired as a senior executive at Ecolab, a \$2 billion Fortune 500 company. His 32-year career with Ecolab included senior management positions with responsibilities for International and North America Institutional Operations, as well as corporate planning, mergers and acquisitions. Carlson serves as a member of the board for KTCA public television and the Minneapolis Boys and Girls Club. He earned a bachelor of science degree from Minnesota State University.

**Commissioner Jerry Carlson
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The purpose of the Department of Trade and Economic Development is to advance the economic vitality of Minnesota. The department employs all available resources to generate high quality jobs; stimulate workforce development; expand Minnesota exports; and encourage domestic and international travel within Minnesota. Within the department, business and community development programs facilitate the growth of existing Minnesota businesses while providing financial, training and technical services to communities, businesses and economic development professionals. The Minnesota Trade Office promotes and assists in the expansion of exports and foreign direct investments that contribute to the growth of the Minnesota economy. Primary offerings include education and training, information and marketing, counseling and export finance. The Minnesota Office of Tourism works closely with communities and businesses to attract more travelers to Minnesota and retain Minnesota resident travel.

International Trade with Minnesota

Free and fair trade will be the true engine of future economic growth in Minnesota. Our federal partners should continue to look for ways to open foreign markets to Minnesota's products, essential to Minnesota's export success. The Ventura Administration urges Congress to give the President fast-track trade negotiating authority and to enact permanent normal trade relations with China.

Commercialization of New Technologies

The Ventura Administration and the University of Minnesota urge the federal government to help facilitate the successful transfer of research and technology from our state's major research institutions to our business community.

Reauthorization of the Clean Water Act

Federal loan matches for wastewater and drinking water revolving loan funds are essential for maintaining environmental protection and rural economic growth. The Ventura Administration, along with local units of government, urges Congress to reauthorize the state revolving loan funds in the Clean Water Act. In addition, the Ventura Administration urges Congress to extend the duration of wastewater discharge permits from five to 10 years.

Better America Bonds

The Ventura Administration, led by the departments of Trade and Economic Development, Natural Resources and Metropolitan Council, supports the federal proposal to change the tax code to provide states, tribes and local communities zero-interest bonds to preserve and enhance open space, protect water quality and clean up brownfields.

Industrial Site Cleanup

The State of Minnesota spends more than \$20 million in each budget to clean up contaminated industrial sites in Minnesota, and urges Congress to reauthorize the Superfund to enable states to continue to fund contaminated sites that do not qualify for federal assistance.

Promoting Tourism in Minnesota

The Ventura Administration urges Congress to help promote Minnesota's tourism industry by eliminating barriers to international travel and funding national tourism efforts, including the National Rural Tourism Foundation at the University of Minnesota. The Ventura Administration supports repeal of the current border crossing system and making the Visa Waiver Pilot Program permanent. In addition, Congress should repeal the Passenger Services Act of 1886 to promote the development of the Great Lakes cruise industry. Finally, federal support for Minnesota's transportation infrastructure, enhancements to our park and recreation areas and efforts that protect our precious natural resources will help keep Minnesota one of the most attractive destinations in the country.

Small Cities Community Development Block Grant

Throughout Minnesota, small communities benefit from community development block grants, used for critical construction of new housing, the revitalization of central business districts and industrial development. The Ventura Administration opposes the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's proposal to award community development block grants to "entitlement areas," cities of more than 50,000 population and counties more than 20,000 population. This proposal would take scarce funds away from small, low-income communities in greater Minnesota and would encourage urban sprawl.

DEPARTMENT OF

Transportation

Governor Ventura appointed Elwyn Tinklenberg commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation in January 1999. Tinklenberg has been involved in transportation policy for more than 12 years. He directed a transportation consulting firm where he worked to secure transportation improvements throughout the state, studied the feasibility of commuter rail projects and appropriate commuter rail corridors. From 1991 to 1997, Tinklenberg was the manager of public services for Anoka County. He served as mayor of Blaine from 1986 until 1996. Since 1996, Tinklenberg has served as a board and executive committee member of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance and served as its past president in 1998.

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The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) was established to provide a balanced transportation system, including aeronautics, highways, motor carriers, ports, public transit, railroads and pipelines for the State of Minnesota. Mn/DOT functions as the principle agency of the state for the development and coordination of state transportation policies, plans and programs. The mission of Mn/DOT is to develop a coordinated transportation network by preserving, managing and improving the state's highway system; promoting and supporting the transit, air, rail, waterways, bicycle and pedestrian systems; promoting nontravel alternatives; and promoting and supporting connections among transportation systems.

Light Rail Transit

In 1999, Congress provided \$17 million for the initial funding of light rail transit and transitway improvements in the Twin Cities. The Hiawatha Corridor is the first leg of a planned network of light rail, commuter rail and transit corridors to serve the future growth of the Twin Cities. The Ventura Administration, led by Mn/DOT and the Metropolitan Council, urges support for continued federal funding for Hiawatha light rail transit and for Minnesota's full funding grant agreement application from the Federal Transit Administration.

Commuter Rail

Several county rail authorities are developing commuter rail corridor plans to serve the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In 1999, the Legislature charged Mn/DOT with developing a commuter rail system plan to ensure consistency among the various corridors. The North Star, Red Rock, Central, and Dan Patch corridors are in various stages of development that will require federal funding to continue efforts toward implementation. Mn/DOT urges Congress to support federal funding for the implementation of these commuter rail systems.

Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI)

Mn/DOT is working in partnership with eight other Midwestern states to develop a regional passenger rail service that would reduce travel times, improve service and provide a modal option for travel from urban center to urban center within the Midwest. Mn/DOT urges Congress to support full funding of TEA-21 high-speed rail development program and to support the High Speed Rail Investment Act. Both bills will provide for the future development of the MWRRI.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

Continued support from Congress is essential in maintaining Mn/DOT's role as a national leader in transportation innovation and application. Intelligent Transportation Systems projects integrate technology into service delivery and provide safe, efficient and effective services at reduced costs to Minnesotans. Mn/DOT urges Congress to continue to support federal funding for Intelligent Transportation Systems programs.

University of Minnesota

Mark Yudof became the 14th president of the University of Minnesota on July 1, 1997. Since taking the office of president at the University of Minnesota, Yudof has designed a plan to preserve historic buildings and to improve classrooms and other student facilities on all four campuses in time for the university's sesquicentennial in 2001. Yudof received a bachelor's degree with honors from the University of Pennsylvania and graduated with honors from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1968. He joined the law faculty at the University of Texas at Austin in 1971, was named dean in 1984 and became executive vice president and provost in 1994. A fellow of the American Bar Foundation, he received the Jurisprudence Award from the Anti-Defamation League in 1991.

President Mark Yudof University of Minnesota

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The University of Minnesota, founded in the belief that all people are enriched by understanding, is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth; to the sharing of this knowledge through education for a diverse community; and to the application of this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation and the world. The University of Minnesota is both the state land-grant university, with a strong tradition of education and public service, and a major research institution, with scholars of national and international reputation.

Science and Technology Research

The University of Minnesota strongly supports continued commitment to federally funded science and technology research and programs, with a focus on organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, National Aeronautical and Space Administration, Department of Energy, U. S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Transportation.

Agricultural and Rural Initiatives

The university recognizes its importance and obligation to outstate and rural Minnesota. It supports continued federal backing for agricultural research, rural technology, rural tourism and extension programs.

Academic Health Center/Medical Needs

The university looks forward to working with Congress to build on last year's efforts and find a lasting solution to the serious problems faced by academic health centers in delivering education to medical professionals. The university also looks forward to helping resolve significant issues related to federal organ transplant allocation policy.

Student Aid

On behalf of its students, the university continues to support increased funding of student financial aid and direct lending programs.

Arts and Humanities

Recognizing the importance of the liberal arts, the university advocates increased funding of the National Endowment of the Humanities and National Endowment for the Arts.

Sesquicentennial

The university looks forward to working with our congressional delegation to commemorate and appropriately celebrate the 150th anniversary (sesquicentennial) of the chartering of the University of Minnesota in 1851.

DEPARTMENT OF

Veterans Affairs

Governor Ventura reappointed Bernie

Melter as the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs in January 1999. He has served as commissioner since 1991. During his 20 years of service in the Marine Corps, he served in aviation ordnance, artillery, and personnel administration and on recruiting duty. Melter has also served as a Goodhue County veterans service officer and assistant veterans service officer for Dakota County.

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The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs serves Minnesota veterans and their dependants and survivors in securing benefits provided by state and federal law. This mission is very important to the more than 450,000 veterans and their eligible family members, a total of nearly one million Minnesotans. Today's Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has developed programs to meet the changing needs of the new generation of veterans. Working in concert with veterans service organizations throughout Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs represents and advocates for those who have taken time from their lives to serve in the armed forces in support of their state and country.

Funding for Veterans Medical Centers

Current fiscal year appropriations are deficient by approximately \$1 billion to serve the health needs of the nation's veterans at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) medical centers. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs supports supplemental federal funding during the 106th Congress that ensures distribution of funds to USDVA medical centers can be made prior to any reduction in services.

Medicare Subvention

Currently, Medicare-eligible veterans are treated in USDVA medical centers, but Medicare payments cannot be collected and retained at these centers. If federal law allowed USDVA medical centers to retain these funds, more veterans could be served at the centers and at outpatient clinics closer to their homes. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs supports passage of Medicare subvention during the 106th Congress.

AIDS research and treatment funding

The USDVA is the world's largest provider of AIDS-related illnesses and yet does not share in the federally appropriated dollars available for treatment. Federal AIDS-related funding would provide additional medical services to veterans.

Global Tobacco Settlements

Thousands of veterans suffer from tobacco-related illnesses and are treated at veterans medical service centers. If the federal government pursues a lawsuit against the tobacco industry to recoup costs to the federal government of treating tobacco-related illnesses, the USDVA should receive its share.

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