



# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

April 23, 2018

The Honorable Kurt Daudt  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Room 463, State Office Building  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Paul Gazelka  
Senate Majority Leader  
Room 3113 Minnesota Senate Building  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Speaker Daudt and Majority Leader Gazelka:

We now have less than a month to conclude the work of this Legislative Session. I am still waiting for the bills that I asked you to expedite, including legislation that would: protect elderly and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect; ensure the safety of our schoolchildren; address our state's opioid crisis and save lives; and stabilize the pensions of over 511,000 Minnesota workers and retirees. I urge you again to pass these measures without delay.

Unfortunately, it appears that the very important work you do on behalf of Minnesotans will be jammed into just a few weeks. These excessive delays will impede the transparency of the legislative process and deny Minnesotans the ability to engage in testimony and public debate on matters of great significance to them. Delaying will only increase the likelihood of errors in bills and rush important policy and budget decisions that need careful consideration.

As we look to the final weeks ahead, I want to outline the parameters that I believe will allow us to come to a productive and timely conclusion to the Legislative Session.

**Transparency and Accountability in End-of-Session Negotiations** –

First, I ask that we prioritize transparency and public accountability in our end-of-session negotiations. Bills should be negotiated in Conference Committees that are open to the public and allow public participation. They is the appropriate places for my Commissioners and members of the public to provide feedback on the bills you are developing.

**All Offers Must Be Made in Writing** – Further, all offers that are exchanged between the Conference Committees and my Commissioners should be conveyed in writing and made available to the public. It will minimize confusion, clarify our positions, and ultimately expedite our decision-making.

**Bills Must Be Available for Public Review** – Before final negotiated bills are voted on, they should be posted and publicly available for review for at least 24 hours. The public deserves to know what is in these proposals, and

Legislators and Administration officials need time to review the bills for errors and to ensure they accurately reflect our negotiated agreements.

**Negotiations Must Include Commissioners and Minority Representatives** – I insist that our negotiations include Members of the Minority and my Commissioners. Each member of the Legislature was elected to represent the interests of her/his constituents, and it is imperative that those Minnesotan voices are brought to the table in negotiations. It will expedite the process and lead to favorable outcomes, if you include your colleagues and my Cabinet Members up-front.

**House and Senate Must Agree on Unified Positions** – Prior to the Executive Branch engaging in final negotiations with the Legislative Branch, the Legislature must first establish unified positions on budget bills and other key legislation. I will not engage the House and Senate separately in three-way negotiations. Rather, I expect to negotiate with the Legislative Branch as a whole, once a unified position is established on any given bill.

**Joint Budget Targets Must be Reached No Later than May 11** – In order to facilitate a constructive end the Legislative Session, we need to set joint budget targets. I suggest that Legislative Leaders and I agree on final joint budget targets no later than Friday, May 11, 2018. This will require the Legislature to set its targets by Friday, May 4, 2018 to provide at least a full week for our two branches to negotiate. This timetable will allow 10 days to finalize our work on supplemental budget items and a Tax Bill, based upon our joint budget targets. If we use the final week of session to reconcile the finer points of the budget bills, we will accomplish what we set out to do: pass fiscally responsible Supplemental Budget and Tax Bills before the end of the Legislative Session on May 21, 2018.

Setting and abiding by these parameters serve not only our better interests, but also the public's interests. Conducting our work with higher measures of transparency and public accountability will produce better results for the people of Minnesota. And setting achievable, responsible deadlines for concluding our work is essential to avoid the last-minute confusion, clashes, and mistakes, which hinder needed progress, and of which Minnesotans are rightly tired.

Finally, I remind you again that I will veto any budget bills, which contain objectionable policy provisions or cut the operating budgets of state agencies. As I have said repeatedly, policy bills should travel separately and be debated and negotiated, based on their own merits. If you wish to send those policy measures to me, please send them separately and send them soon. And, with a \$329 million surplus, cuts to state agencies are entirely unwarranted. Agency budgets were negotiated and agreed to last year, and I will not reconsider those decisions.

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I urge you not to waste what little time remains in this Legislative Session by sending me bills that contain provisions I have clearly indicated I will veto. If you must, please do so as soon as possible, so that ample time remains to consider proposals, to which we can all agree, before your Constitutional deadline for adjournment.

As I have said earlier, I will not call a Special Session.

There is still time remaining in this Session for Legislators to debate publicly and act on legislation, upon which we can all agree. Minnesotans want and deserve a Legislature that is able to complete its work in a timely fashion. I urge you to do that work now, without further delays.

I look forward to coming to agreement on a shared framework for achieving a timely and productive conclusion of the 2018 Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Dayton". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mark Dayton  
Governor

cc: The Honorable Tom Bakk, Senate Minority Leader  
The Honorable Melissa Hortman, House Minority Leader