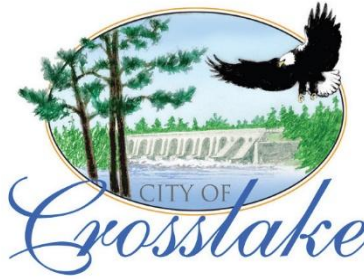


Jackson M. Purfeerst  
Mayor  
815-904-9665  
jpurfeerst@cityofcrosslake.org



City Hall: 218-692-2688  
13888 Daggett Bay Rd  
Crosslake, Minnesota 56442  
www.cityofcrosslake.org

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## Minnesota Mayors

Representing Cities Across the State of Minnesota

December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

Dear Minnesota State Representatives, Senators, & Governor Walz,

As mayors representing cities of every size across the State of Minnesota, we are on the front lines of delivering essential services, maintaining public safety, and ensuring that our communities remain places where families and businesses can thrive. It is from this position of direct responsibility that we write to express **deep concern**—and growing frustration—about the fiscal direction of the state and its increasing impact on our cities and the residents we serve.

**Minnesotans watched an historic \$18 billion surplus disappear in a single biennium, only to now face an updated projected \$2.9 billion–\$3 billion deficit in the 2028–29 biennium.**<sup>1</sup> As mayors, we see firsthand how these decisions ripple outward. Fraud, unchecked spending, and inconsistent fiscal management in St. Paul have trickled down to our cities—reducing our capacity to plan responsibly, maintain infrastructure, hire and retain employees, and sustain core services without overburdening local taxpayers.

The recent Minnesota Chamber of Commerce report shows our state slipping in national economic rankings,<sup>2</sup> and these statewide indicators match what we observe at the local level. Between 2019 and 2024, Minnesota ranked:<sup>234</sup>

- **33rd in GDP Growth**
- **39th in Job Growth**
- **40th in Labor Force Growth**
- **33rd in Per-Capita Income Growth**
- **46th in Median Household Income Growth**
- **44th in Tech Job Growth**
- **44th in Overall Tax Competitiveness**
- **Net out-migration of nearly 48,000 residents from 2020–2024**<sup>34</sup>

These are not abstractions—they represent the real pressures faced by our cities: **workforce shortages, slowed business investment, rising operational and construction costs, and families choosing to leave Minnesota altogether.**

On top of these economic realities, many Minnesota cities are confronting significant property tax levy pressures. Preliminary statewide data, **on average**, for 2026 shows cities may raise levies by up to **8.7%**, with counties up to **8.1%**.<sup>3</sup> These increases are not simply local decisions; they stem directly from state policies, mandates, and cost shifts that leave cities with no choice but to pass these burdens onto homeowners and businesses.

As mayors, we are committed to responsible budgeting, fiscal restraint, and delivering high-quality local services. Yet there is a growing disconnect between state-level fiscal decisions and the strain they place on the cities we lead. **When the state expands programs or shifts responsibilities without stable funding, it is our residents—families, seniors, businesses, and workers—who ultimately bear the cost.**

Cities are the level of government closest to the people, responding when snowplows don't arrive, when streetlights or water mains fail, when businesses need permitting help, or when seniors seek support. Every unfunded mandate or cost shift forces us into difficult choices: raise taxes, cut services, delay infrastructure, or stretch thin city staff even further. This strain now extends to the very core of community safety—our police officers and firefighters. They are the frontline protection for our residents, yet rising levies and state-imposed costs are making it increasingly difficult for cities to invest in the additional public safety staff our communities genuinely need to stay safe.

Minnesotans expect the following from their elected leaders—at every level:

- **Responsible and transparent state budgeting**
- **A regulatory and tax environment that supports jobs and economic growth**
- **Protection for taxpayers—especially those on fixed incomes**
- **Stability and predictability for local governments**
- **Long-term fiscal sustainability that does not rely on one-time windfalls**

**When these expectations go unmet, cities feel the consequences first—and our residents feel them the most.**

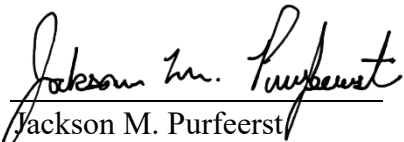
We extend our sincere appreciation to the legislators who continue to advocate for fiscal discipline, pro-growth policies, and local government stability. Your work does not go unnoticed.

At the same time, we must emphasize:

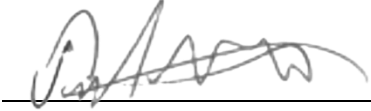
Our residents deserve better than deficits, economic decline, and policies that push families and businesses away. **We, as mayors, can only support our cities for so long before the heavy hand of state mandates and financial pressure demands more than our communities can provide.**

Although state statute requires a balanced budget, relying on one-time surplus dollars to support ongoing commitments has created structural strain—reducing the state's ability to sustain existing programs or invest in new ones in the years to come. **Our state owes it to our citizens to practice responsible fiscal management and to stop taxing our families, seniors, and businesses out of Minnesota.** We urge the Legislature to course-correct and to remember that every dollar you manage belongs not to the Capitol, but to the people of Minnesota.

Respectfully,  
**The Undersigned Mayors of Minnesota**



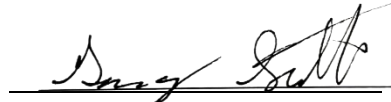
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Mayor of Crosslake



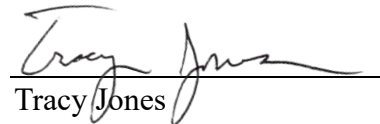
Tyler Gardner  
Mayor of Pequot Lakes



Todd Roggenkamp  
Mayor of Breezy Point



Gary Staples  
Mayor of Fifty Lakes



Tracy Jones  
Mayor of Emily



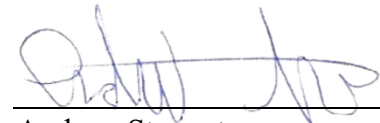
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Mayor of Manhattan Beach



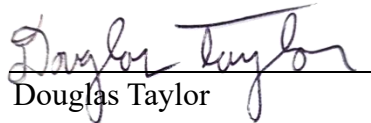
Diane Cash  
Mayor of Crosby



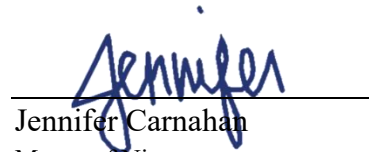
Tamara Hansen  
Mayor of Pine River



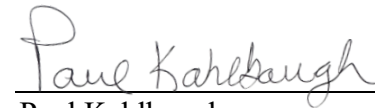
Andrew Stewart  
Mayor of Lake Shore



Douglas Taylor  
Mayor of Backus



Jennifer Carnahan  
Mayor of Nisswa



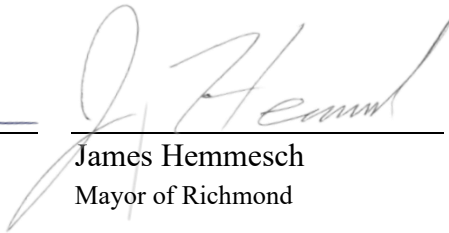
Paul Kahlbaugh  
Mayor of Lengby



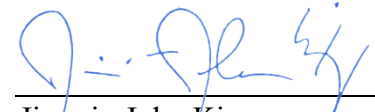
Sandy Lange  
Mayor of Swanville



James Bulman  
Mayor of Montevideo



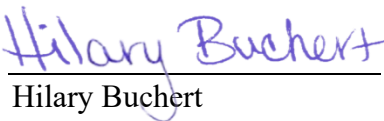
James Hemmesch  
Mayor of Richmond



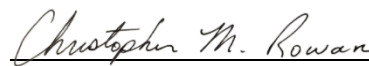
Jimmie-John King  
Mayor of Stewartville



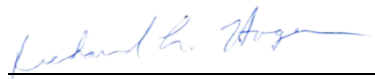
Jon Hawkinson  
Mayor of Olivia




Hilary Buchert  
Mayor of Russell



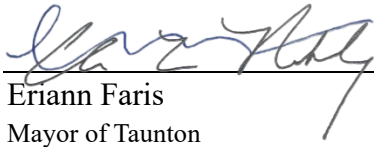
Christopher Rowan  
Mayor of Watkins



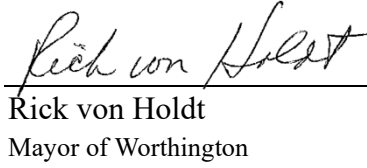
Richard L. Hagen  
Mayor of Hanley Falls



Mike Lorenson  
Mayor of Thief River Falls



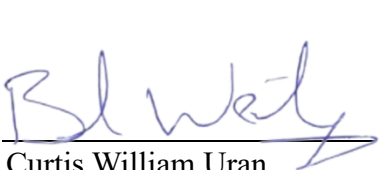
Eriann Faris  
Mayor of Taunton



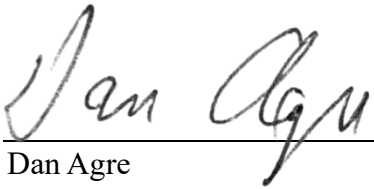
Rick von Holdt  
Mayor of Worthington



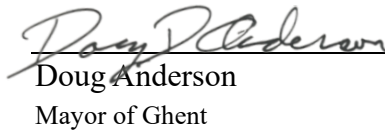
Brandon Weiberg  
Mayor of Taylors Falls



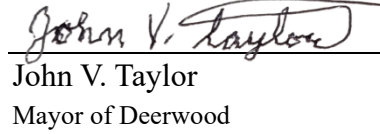
Curtis William Uran  
Mayor of Mahanomen



Dan Agre  
Mayor of Sacred Heart



Doug Anderson  
Mayor of Ghent



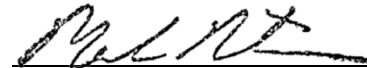
John V. Taylor  
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George M. Deiss  
Mayor of Wadena



Nathaniel "Nate" W. George  
Mayor of Braham



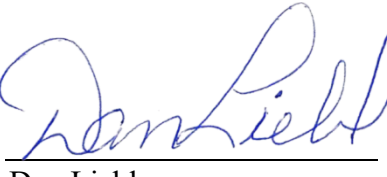
Mark Nilson  
Mayor of Ogilvie



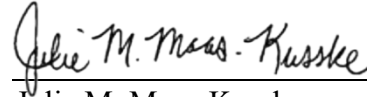
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Mayor of Bovey



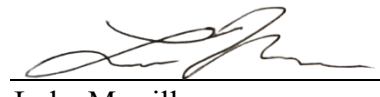
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Mayor of Roseau



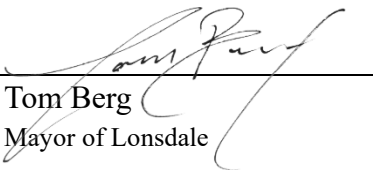
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Mayor of Lake Henry



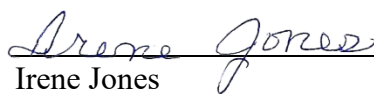
Julie M. Maas-Kusske  
Mayor of Maple Plain



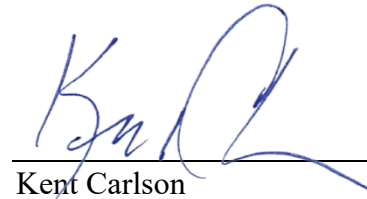
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Mayor of Isanti



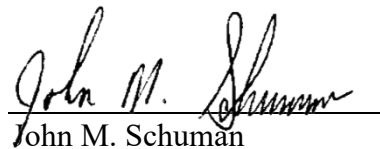
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Mayor of Lonsdale



Irene Jones  
Mayor of Hollandale



Kent Carlson  
Mayor of Deephaven



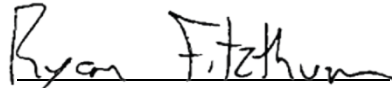
John M. Schuman  
Mayor of Darfur



Jeffery D. Weisensel  
Mayor of Rosemount



Charles L. Nickolay  
Mayor of New Prague



Ryan Fitzthum  
Mayor of Sartell



Bryant Stiernagle  
Mayor of Easton



Brian Kirkham  
Mayor of Ham Lake



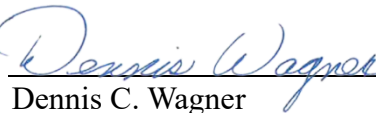
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Mayor of Lowry



Andrea Zupancich  
Mayor of Babbitt



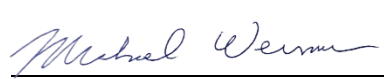
Russell E. Wilson  
Mayor of Breckenridge



Dennis C. Wagner  
Mayor of Rainer



Greg Zgutowicz  
Mayor of Hanover



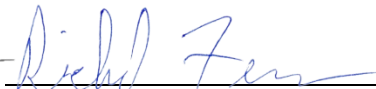
Michael Werman  
Mayor of Rockford



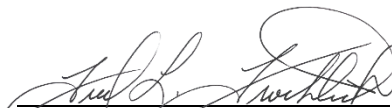
James Kreemer  
Mayor of Long Prairie



Gayle Holte  
Mayor of Hitterdal



Richard Ferguson  
Mayor of Big Falls



Fred L. Fröhlich  
Mayor of Nicollet



Pamela J. Berg  
Mayor of Climax



Mark C. Larson  
Mayor of Argyle



Rich Pohlmeier  
Mayor of Brownton



Christian Harmeyer  
Mayor of Le Center



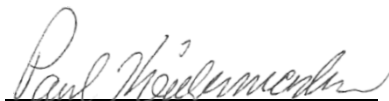
Jason Rick  
Mayor of Barnesville



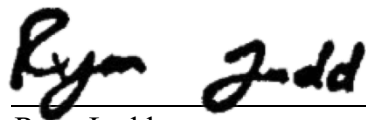
Shane Sheets, MBA  
Mayor of Green Isle



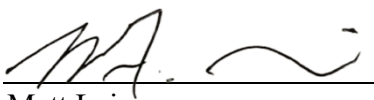
Corey Moseng  
Mayor of Cottonwood



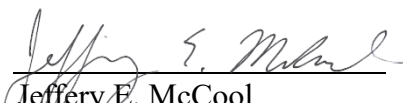
Paul Kreidermacher  
Mayor of Rollingstone



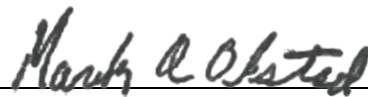
Ryan Ladd  
Mayor of Belle Plaine



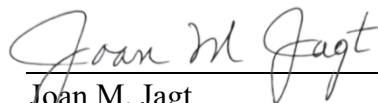
Matt Lein  
Mayor of Cologne



Jeffery E. McCool  
Mayor of West Concord



Mark Olstad  
Mayor of East Grand Forks



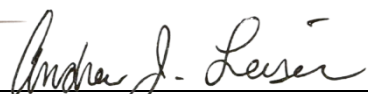
Joan M. Jagt  
Mayor of Tyler



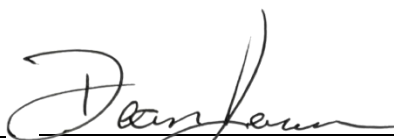
Chris Kostik  
Mayor of Credit River



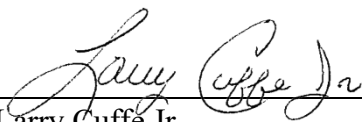
Weston Rolf  
Mayor of Oak Grove



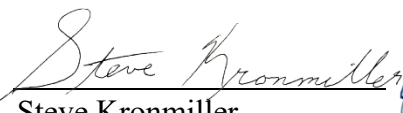
Andrew J. Leisen  
Mayor of Rose Creek



Dean Jensen  
Mayor of Graceville



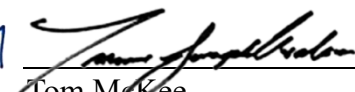
Larry Cuffe Jr.  
Mayor of Virginia



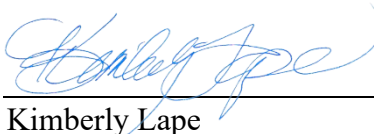
Steve Kronmiller  
Mayor of Scandia



Jeff R. Bloom  
Mayor of Wrenshall



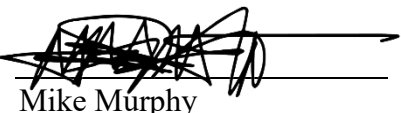
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Mayor of Corcoran



Kimberly Lape  
Mayor of Jasper



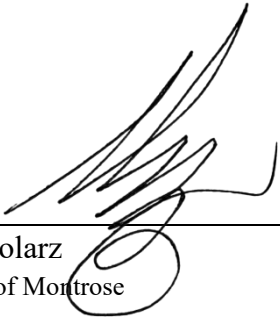
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Mayor of Akeley



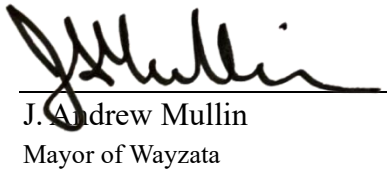
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Mayor of Lexington



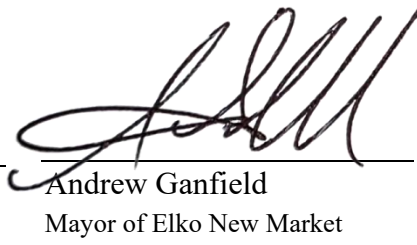
Jeff Giefer  
Mayor of Grant



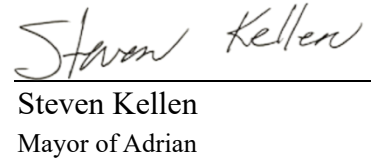
Sam Solarz  
Mayor of Montrose



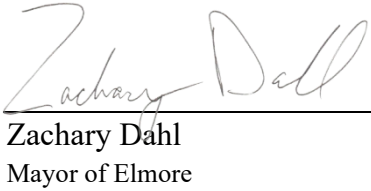
J. Andrew Mullin  
Mayor of Wayzata



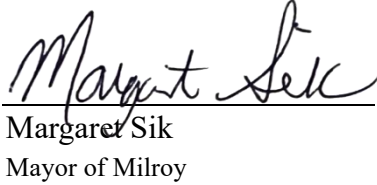
Andrew Ganfield  
Mayor of Elko New Market



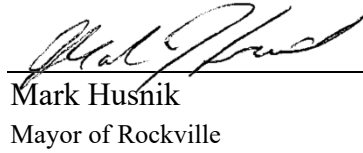
Steven Kellen  
Mayor of Adrian



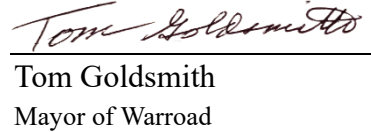
Zachary Dahl  
Mayor of Elmore



Margaret Sik  
Mayor of Milroy



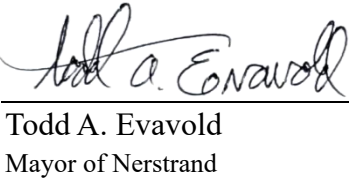
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Mayor of Rockville



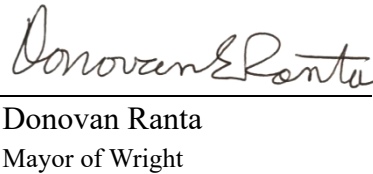
Tom Goldsmith  
Mayor of Warroad



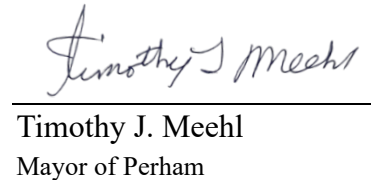
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Mayor of Amboy



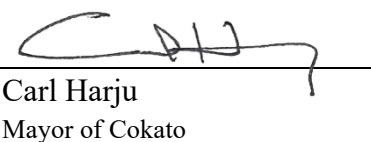
Todd A. Evavold  
Mayor of Nerstrand



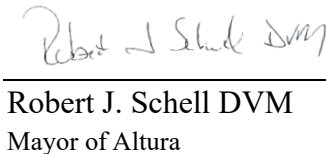
Donovan Ranta  
Mayor of Wright



Timothy J. Meehl  
Mayor of Perham



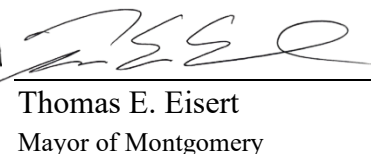
Carl Harju  
Mayor of Cokato



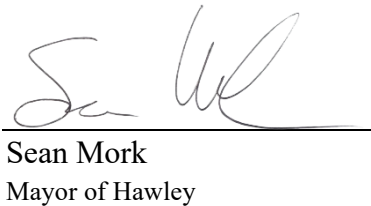
Robert J. Schell DVM  
Mayor of Altura



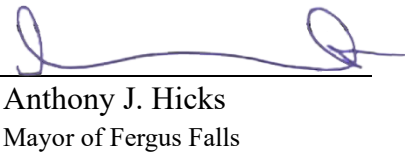
Jerry Koch  
Mayor of Coon Rapids



Thomas E. Eisert  
Mayor of Montgomery



Sean Mork  
Mayor of Hawley



Anthony J. Hicks  
Mayor of Fergus Falls

**Footnotes (Print Version)**

**\*THIS IS THE OPINION OF SAID SIGNED MAYORS ONLY AND NOT AN OFFICAL POSITION OF ANY CITY GOVERNMENT\***

1. **Minnesota Management & Budget Forecast / MPR News Coverage** – Updated state economic forecast showing a projected **\$2.9–\$3.0 billion deficit** in FY 2028–29. Source: <https://mprnews.org/story/2025/12/04/new-minnesota-economic-forecast-will-dictate-scope-of-2026-session>
2. **Minnesota Chamber of Commerce – Business Benchmarks Report** Rankings on job growth, GDP growth, workforce strength, and business competitiveness. <https://www.mnchamber.com/businessbenchmarks>
3. **KSTP News — “Which Minnesota cities are facing the biggest property tax hikes?”** Preliminary 2026 levies show city increases up to **8.7%**, county increases up to **8.1%**. <https://kstp.com/tracking-your-tax-dollars/which-minnesota-cities-are-facing-the-biggest-property-tax-hikes/>
4. **KSTP News — Additional Tax Impact Reporting** Coverage of statewide homeowner impacts and rising property tax burdens. <https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/minnesotans-could-face-950m-in-property-tax-increases-in-2026/>