



**MEEKER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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February 18, 2025

Senator Glenn Gruenhagen
2417 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Governor's Budget Recommendations for FY 2026-27

Senator Gruenhagen:

The Governor's budget recommendations for the State of Minnesota's FY 2026-27 biennium include more than \$200 million in cost shifts to counties for a variety of mandated services. These cost shifts lead to higher costs for counties, which ultimately results in greater impacts on the property tax levy. Increased funding responsibilities for the Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP), disability waiver services, and the behavioral health fund will cost the taxpayers of Meeker County over \$860,000 per year, which will equate to an increase in the property tax levy of 5% on top of the normal increase in operating costs.

In addition to the cost shifts, the proposed budget also includes reductions in aid payments to counties, including the elimination of the local cannabis aid that will be used to support the complicated interactions with cannabis licensing, zoning, required inspections, public safety, and local public health. Additionally, the budget recommendations include a significant reduction in aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention aid. Meeker County has pursued a number of ventures to control the spread of AIS in its lakes to ensure they remain a recreational destination. Meeker County's AIS Advisory Committee has drafted a detailed letter outlining the importance of the funding to their work (enclosed).

The Meeker County Board of Commissioners has prided itself in minimizing increases to its property tax levy to help control the cost of its high-quality government services for its constituents; the Governor's proposed budget will make that more challenging. We hope that the impact of these proposals on local taxpayers will be weighed as negotiations surrounding the final budget continue throughout the ongoing legislative session.

If you have any questions, please reach out to our County Administrator, Andrew Letson, at andrew.letson@co.meeker.mn.us or via phone at 320-693-5201.

Sincerely,



Paul Johnson
Commissioner, Chair

Enclosure