



March 15, 2024

The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor, State of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

via electronic delivery

Dear Governor Tim Walz,

This past winter was devastating to the resort owners in Minnesota. As the North Star State, winter activities are not just fun, these activities contribute to the economic vitality of many, many Minnesotan families. As the thin ice recedes resort owners are hoping to shift to spring fishing and try to recover the winter losses. Unfortunately, the resort owners and communities surrounding Mille Lacs Lake received more devastating news for the upcoming walleye season.

With the DNR signaling that walleye fishing will be catch-and-release only, we formally request an emergency be declared for the greater Mille Lacs Lake area. As part of this emergency declaration, we request that you appropriate \$5,000,000 of the emergency reserve funds to these communities. This emergency will give the small businesses that rely on tourism relief during this crushing season.

The resorts, restaurants, and surrounding businesses of the Mille Lacs Lake community have already faced a devastatingly light winter season that saw little to no winter activities to attract tourism to the area. Ice fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing attract visitors from across the country to our part of Minnesota. With little ice and snow, this year's attendance numbers are way down and the income that keeps our community's economy flowing is equally down.

Now with what will likely be a catch-and-release only season for walleye on Mille Lacs Lake until mid-August, those businesses will continue to struggle as vacationers choose other destinations to spend their time and money. These businesses know they must plan for variable weather and slower-than-expected seasons. But two seasons in a row of low attendance is unsustainable for many of these small businesses that have been locally owned for decades.

This is why it is urgently important to declare an emergency for the Mille Lacs Lake area and provide access to disaster relief funds for these businesses that are facing rue financial hardship. The culture of locally owned and operated businesses is what sets the Minnesota resort experience apart from the rest of the world. We must do everything possible to preserve the institutions that families have enjoyed year after year for decades and made lasting memories at.

Thank you for your consideration.



Ron Kresha
State Representative District 10A



Brian Johnson
State Representative District 28A



Isaac Schultz
State Representative District 10B



Josh Hientzeman
State Representative District 6B