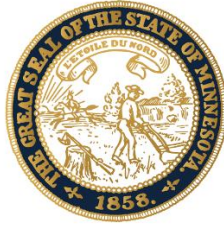


Ron Kresha
Representative
District 10A



Minnesota
House of
Representatives

March 21, 2024

The Honorable Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Speaker Melissa Hortman
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Majority Leader Jamie Long
459 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

via electronic delivery

Dear Governor Walz, Speaker Hortman and Majority Leader Long,

This letter is to inform you that I intend to remain in office number 207 as assigned to District 10A in the State Office building through the end of 2024. Due to the unnecessary disruption and exorbitant cost, the House Office Expansion project must be canceled or indefinitely postponed until we have a public discussion regarding the project.

Proceeding with this offensively lavish expansion presents a serious obstacle to serving our constituents in a transparent and accessible manner. I cannot provide the level of service they deserve in temporary quarters hidden away from the public eye for the next three years.

Like so many other poorly planned government projects, the grand designs incorporated into the Democrats' expansion plans are already leading to skyrocketing costs. The total project cost has risen to nearly \$750 million, with taxpayers on the hook for \$275 million in interest payments. This is obscene.

The simple truth is this gilded expansion is unnecessary and unjustifiable. As a part-time legislature, there is no justification for doubling the size of our office space. It's a monument to out-of-touch politicians who see themselves as more important than the hardworking men and women they represent.

If this project was truly necessary, it would not have been snuck past the public in one of the more disgraceful backroom deals in recent memory. The Capitol Area Building Account, which provides the underlying authority to make improvements, was established in the 2021 State Government Finance bill passed during the first special session that year.

The phrase "Capitol Area Building Account" does not appear in a single piece of legislation introduced in regular or special sessions during the 2021-22 biennium. The first and only appearance was in a last-minute deal during a special session done online and away from the public eye. The account is intended only to address "critical health, life safety, and security needs."

In reality, the State Office Building needs routine maintenance common in buildings nearing a century of use. We don't need to spend three quarters of a billion dollars to fix the windows, roof, plumbing and HVAC.

Moreover, as the 2024 "fix-it" session drags on, it's clear the House Democrats' SOB Expansion is part of a larger plan to convert our citizen-led, part-time legislature into a full-time playground for career politicians.

This scheme is being carried out in a similarly duplicitous manner as the SOB expansion, with the full-time legislature for career politicians buried into a larger constitutional amendment with no notice to the public and little explanation from proponents who stand to financially benefit. The average politician's salary in states with a full-time legislature is nearly double the salary of Minnesota lawmakers.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Kresha".

Ron Kresha
Representative, District 10A