



WASHINGTON
COUNTY
Community
Development
Agency

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March 26, 2025

House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Back, Chair Pinto, and Committee Members,

The Washington County CDA strongly supports House File 1965 which appropriates one-time funds to the Small Business Assistance Partnerships Program.

The Washington County CDA is the economic development authority serving the 33 distinct and diverse municipalities in Washington County. One of the most important drivers of our economy is small businesses. In fact, 95% of the businesses in Washington County have fewer than 50 employees and 86% have less than 20 employees.

We have found the best way to assist our entrepreneurs in creating and sustaining successful business is through small business assistance programs like the Open to Business program. The Open to Business program has provided technical assistance to over 1,000 entrepreneurs and small business owners in the county, since 2017. The technical assistance provided is at no cost to the individual businesses and may include how to start a new business, financial packaging, business plan development, financial proformas and cash flow management assistance, and expansion guidance for existing small businesses. Direct business loans offered through the Open to Business Program have spurred new commercial and industrial business development opportunities in Washington County.

These results would not be possible without the Small Business Assistance Partnerships Program. Minnesota is facing tough financial decisions. Investment in the Small Business Assistance Partnerships Program has the highest return on investment for the state and the communities served.

Please support House File 1965 to ensure the vitality and prosperity of our small businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Taphorn', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Melissa Taphorn
Executive Director