



February 24, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for H.F. 337 (Zelevnikar) – Ambulance Operating Deficit Grant Program

Dear Representative Backer and members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee,

Created in 1994, the MRHA has grown to be a recognized advocate for rural health in Minnesota. Our mission is to strengthen health care for rural Minnesotans. On behalf of our nearly 200 members, we share our support for the EMS system that serves rural Minnesota.

I am writing today in support of H.F. 337 (Zelevnikar) which would establish a program to provide ongoing funding for struggling rural ambulance services.

In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature made an important first step in ensuring the sustainability of rural ambulance services. The \$24 million investment was timely and served as a lifeline for many struggling services. While the funding received this past year will help to offset current losses, we trust you are as concerned as we are about how long these municipalities and organizations can continue without ongoing funding.

The funding crisis we face today has been long coming. Over the past 20 years, reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid have been flat and local and state support has been sporadic. All while the cost of operating an ambulance service has increased. Changes in reimbursement policy are a long-term solution. Today we need to know that our ambulance services will be there to answer the call when someone dials 911 or when a patient needs to be transferred to a tertiary center for advanced care. We ask that you continue to support rural EMS, the people doing the work every day, and the people who trust that they will be there to answer the call.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to share the importance of financial support to ensure the sustainability of our rural ambulance industry. If you have any questions regarding MRHA's position, feel free to contact me at mark@mnruralhealth.org or 218-201-0098.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Jones', is written over a white background.

Mark Jones
Executive Director