



To: Capital Investment Committee Members
From: Cook County Historical Society
Subject: Minnesota State Bonding Proposal
Date: April 18, 2022

Honorable members of the committee:

For nearly a century, Cook County Historical Society has collected, preserved, and disseminated knowledge about Cook County's distinct heritage to thousands of visitors to Grand Marais each year. Please find below the request for an act relating to capital improvements; appropriating money to renovate the five sites of Historic Cook County; and authorizing the sale and issuance of state bonds.

RENOVATION HISTORIC SITES; COOK COUNTY: Cook County Historical Society operates five (5) sites (collectively known as 'Historic Cook County') which includes three (3) properties on the National Register of Historic Places and hosts 28,000+ artifacts in archival storage documenting the rich history of the region. Given the antiquated nature of the historical sites—and the loss of archival collections following multiple years of flooding and other environmental damage—Cook County Historical Society seeks to build a new collections storage facility (Site 6) on recently acquired property outside of the Lake Superior flood zone and to renovate other existing historic structures to ensure their accessibility in the future.

Without the appropriations bond from the State of Minnesota, Cook County Historical Society's ability to steward the artifacts and sites integral to the region's cultural and industrial legacy will fall into further decline due to existing budget constraints. In the long-term interest of Cook County residents and the wider Northeast Minnesota/Lake Superior regional economy, preservation efforts of Historic Cook County sites will ensure the cultural narratives and ephemera of the county be protected for generations to come.

APPROPRIATION SUMMARY: \$1,092,650 (50% of \$2,185,300 total cost) in appropriations from the bond proceeds fund to predesign, design, construct, furnish, and equip the renovation of the following Historic Cook County sites:

- Site 1 – Cook County History Museum [Total Est. Expense – \$362,000]
- Site 2 – Johnson Heritage Post Art Gallery [Total Est. Expense - \$75,000]
- Site 3 – Bally Blacksmith Shop [Total Est. Expense - \$94,000]
- Site 4 – St. Francis Xavier Church (Chippewa City Church) [Total Est. Expense - \$575,000]
- Site 5 – 1930s Nee-Gee Fishing Tug and Fish House [Total Est. Expense - \$394,000]
- Site 6 – Archival Storage Facility [Total Est. Expense - \$685,300]

Cook County Historical Society
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