



February 26, 2025

**Re: Opposition of HF 428 – Government data retention changes**

**Chair Scott and members of the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law committee:**

The League of Minnesota Cities appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HF 428. On behalf of our 841 member cities, we respectfully request that members oppose this proposal which would greatly expand the type, volume, and retention periods of records cities must keep while also limiting city discretion on which records can be destroyed.

Records management laws and their associated retention schedules strike a crucial balance between the public's right to access government information and the need to maintain or destroy city records. Cities are legally required to maintain a complete and accurate record of all transactions and affairs, with the general record retention schedule for cities encompassing 29 categories and over 700 specific records. These records must be preserved for a specified amount of time, regardless of the form they take. For instance, a resident complaint about their neighbor's property, whether it is received via email or letter, must be retained for 7 years.

The broad definition of "correspondence" in this bill would require a city to retain nearly all documents it has created or received for a minimum duration of three years. This expansion would require the preservation of material and information that has minimal business, legal, fiscal, or historical value, which will result in additional costs to cities. There are many routine tasks that city staff complete in written or electronic based communications that would be unnecessarily encompassed by these changes.

The broad scope of records that must be retained under the language in HF 428 will have a great fiscal impact and require substantial dedication of city staff time and resources. In 2018, the Office of Minnesota Management and Budget conducted a local impact note for HF 1185-1E, which has identical language to this bill. The report concluded that these new state mandated changes to record retention requirements would impose costs on local units of government. Cities would see increased costs for storage, backup storage, disaster recovery planning, and extensive staff time to review increased amount of data to respond to data practices requests. The financial implications of this bill would divert precious resources away from other critical city business, such as infrastructure repair or city administrative functions.

Thank you for your consideration of the League's concerns with the language in HF 428. We look forward to continuing working with Chair Scott and the committee on this and other records retention issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tori Kee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Intergovernmental Relations Representative & Attorney  
League of Minnesota Cities