



Letter of Support – H.F. 1976

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Chair Baker and members of the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of H.F. 1976.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Clay County, positioned along Minnesota's western border, is the fastest growing region outside of the Twin Cities metro and is home to a vibrant and diverse business community. This includes local government, school districts, institutions of higher education, small retail establishments, large agriculture processors, and more. Thousands of Minnesotans are employe in our region and play a crucial role in propelling the state economy forward.

Burdensome policies, like Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML), threaten the economic vitality of our region. As currently written, Minnesota's PFML will have detrimental impacts on Minnesota businesses, especially in Greater Minnesota where mandates will reduce our region's competitive advantage and hinders economic development. Additionally, Minnesota's PFML program disproportionately impacts border communities. Clay County often finds itself competing with North Dakota for employees and businesses, creating a more restrictive business environment may cause additional businesses to relocate. As a representative of the community, we advocate to make pragmatic adjustments to the PFML, program prior to implementation, to provide employers across Clay County with meaningful relief, clarity, and direction. Our key priorities are:

- Clarity around collective bargaining agreements, multi-state workers and compatibility with Earned Sick and Safe Time.
- Conformity to the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act definition of family.
- Broader exemptions for seasonal and student employees.
- Expansion of comparable benefits and private plan option.
- Predictability and stability of premium rates.
- Additional relief for small Greater Minnesota businesses.

H.F. 1976, coupled with other proposed legislation, will make meaningful adjustments to the PFML program – providing additional support and direction necessary prior to implementation. These reforms are imperative to protecting Minnesota's business climate. We strongly believe that to make Minnesota the best state to live, work, and recreate, communities must be competitive, conducive to economic development, and supportive of business vitality. I strongly urge the committee to support HF 1976.

Thank you for your consideration on this critical matter and your support for Minnesota's business community.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce