



March 27, 2025

Co-Chair Fue Lee
Co-Chair Mary Franson
House Capital Investment Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for H.F. 1274 - Appropriation for the Innovation Hub in Shakopee

Dear Co-Chair Lee, Co-Chair Franson, and Members of the Capital Investment Committee:

On behalf of the Shakopee Area Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our strong support for H.F. 1274, authored by Representative Tabke and Representative Bakeberg, which would appropriate \$4 million from the general fund to design, construct, furnish, and equip the Innovation Hub in Shakopee. We respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this bill at your upcoming committee hearing.

The Innovation Hub project addresses a critical gap in our regional infrastructure. Scott County does not have a community or technical college, creating significant barriers for residents seeking post-secondary training opportunities. This absence has long hampered our ability to develop the skilled workforce that our local businesses need to thrive and grow. The proposed Innovation Hub will serve as a regional workforce training center that provides accessible skills training aligned with employer needs, creating pathways to career advancement for residents of all ages.

Beyond workforce development, the Innovation Hub will function as an entrepreneur incubator facility, directly supporting business growth in our community. This component aligns perfectly with our Chamber's mission to foster economic development in Shakopee. The facility will provide dedicated space for startups and emerging businesses, along with access to resources, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities. By nurturing new businesses from inception through growth phases, we can strengthen our local economy and create new job opportunities for area residents.

The \$4 million state investment will yield significant returns for our community and the state. It will help create a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers for our diverse business community, ranging from manufacturing and technology to healthcare and hospitality. Many of our members consistently report difficulties finding qualified workers with the specific skills needed in today's economy, and this facility will help address that ongoing challenge. Additionally, the Innovation

Hub will support business retention and expansion efforts, enhance Shakopee's ability to attract new employers, and strengthen our downtown area through increased activity.

The Shakopee business community is firmly committed to this project's success. Our Chamber represents over 300 businesses in the area, and we regularly hear from members about the workforce challenges they face. The Innovation Hub represents a strategic solution to these challenges, providing both immediate benefits through training programs and long-term economic growth through business development.

We respectfully urge the Committee to approve H.F. 1274 and invest in Shakopee's economic future through the Innovation Hub project. This facility will not only benefit our community but will strengthen the economic vitality of the entire region. Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



Tim Zunker
President
Shakopee Area Chamber of Commerce