



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

County officials comment on Feb. Forecast, announce 2018 legislative priorities focused on mental health bonding initiative

ST. PAUL, MN – Today over 250 county commissioners and officials from nearly every Minnesota county gathered at the Minnesota State Capitol as part of “County Day at the Capitol,” organized by the Association of Minnesota Counties. Officials met with state legislators to advocate for their 2018 legislative priorities.

“The state’s budget surplus should first and foremost be targeted towards under-funded county services that are both mandated and essential. This includes continued funding for statewide transportation needs as well as additional resources to help counties verify eligibility for those seeking medical assistance, said Isanti County Commissioner Susan Morris, president of the Association of Minnesota Counties. “If the state is able to deliver on these commitments, it is less likely that counties will be in a situation where they are forced to raise levies on residents or cut vital services.”

“County leaders are unified in our top legislative priority this year: supporting bonding proposals to fund regional facilities addressing behavioral health crises in order to enhance the mental health continuum of care. Today’s budget news gives the legislature more flexibility to partner with counties on this important initiative,” said Anoka County Commissioner Scott Schulte, AMC First Vice President.

[The Association of Minnesota Counties’ 2018 Legislative Priorities](#) are:

- **MENTAL HEALTH REGIONAL CRISIS CENTERS AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:** AMC supports bonding proposals that strengthen the mental health continuum of care through regional crisis centers to provide stabilization services, and the creation of additional supportive housing options.
- **MINNESOTA ELIGIBILITY TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM (METS) FIELD TEST:** AMC supports legislation that would require a field test of periodic data matching before full scale implementation to ensure functionality of the technology system.
- **OPIOIDS:** AMC supports providing the resources necessary to improve the public health and public safety response to the opioid epidemic.
- **BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING:** AMC supports the build-out of broadband infrastructure in Minnesota, including legislation that would provide continue funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program.

- TRANSPORTATION FUNDING: AMC supports continued comprehensive transportation funding that includes new revenue for roads, bridges, and transit.
- LAND ACQUISITIONS: AMC supports requiring that county boards be notified of, and allowed to comment on, applications for state-funded acquisition projects that are proposed in the county.

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The Association of Minnesota Counties is a voluntary statewide organization that assists the state's 87 counties in providing effective county governance to the people of Minnesota. The association works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government in seeing that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted. In addition, the Association provides educational programs, training, research and communications for county officials.

The following officials are available for individual media interviews in-person or phone upon request:

- AMC President Susan Morris, Isanti County Commissioner
- AMC 1st Vice President Scott Schulte, Anoka County Commissioner
- AMC Past President Gary Hendrickx, Swift County Commissioner
- AMC Executive Director Julie Ring