



**Dedicated to a Strong Greater Minnesota**

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## **Greater Minnesota city leaders to state lawmakers: Now is not the time to press the pause button**

ALEXANDRIA, MINN.— As the legal fight over funding for the Legislature drags on and the 2018 governor’s race heats up, Greater Minnesota city leaders are urging lawmakers to keep their focus on the upcoming legislative session and not fall prey to distractions.

More than 100 other city officials from throughout Greater Minnesota convened in Alexandria this week for the CGMC’s annual two-day fall conference. At the event, CGMC members adopted the organization’s policy positions and discussed legislative priorities for the 2018 legislative session. While a bonding bill, local government aid (LGA) and city streets were among the top issues, city leaders also stressed the importance of making sure legislators stay on task.

“Now is not the time to press the pause button,” said Granite Falls Mayor Dave Smiglewski, who serves as president of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC). “Greater Minnesota still has a lot of unaddressed needs. We are counting on our legislators to stay focused on their jobs and their commitment to strengthening our communities.”

Bemidji City Councilor Ron Johnson voiced concern that with an election looming, legislators may be more interested in touting accomplishments from last session than passing new legislation in 2018.

“The Legislature may have passed tax, transportation and bonding bills last year, but that doesn’t mean their job is done for the biennium,” said Bemidji City Councilor Ron Johnson. “Truth is, the progress made in 2017 only scratches the surface when it comes to meeting all of the ongoing and growing needs in our city and others in Greater Minnesota.”

City officials who attended the conference agreed that a bonding bill likely poses the best hope for passing a piece of major legislation in 2018, noting that many legislators have voiced a desire for a large public works bill to make key investments in the state’s infrastructure. While each city has its own individual needs, a recurring theme throughout Greater Minnesota is the need for additional state bonding dollars to help repair or replace aging waste water treatment facilities.

In addition to bonding, the CGMC plans to advocate for an LGA increase to help cities make up for inflation and increasing costs, as well as funding to assist with much-needed repairs to city streets. There are also a number of issues on the horizon that the CGMC hopes the Legislature will keep on its radar, including the impact a national tax overhaul could have on local communities and the growing child care shortage in Greater Minnesota.

“Legislators and the Governor will have plenty of work to cram into a few short weeks,” Smiglewski said. “Residents of Greater Minnesota expect our state leaders to set their squabbles aside, buckle down and pass legislation that will invest in the future of our communities.”

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*The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization representing 94 cities outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Coalition educates legislators about issues important to Greater Minnesota. Visit the CGMC online at [greatermncities.org](http://greatermncities.org).*