



**Dedicated to a Strong Greater Minnesota**

**For Immediate Release**

March 16, 2016

Contact: Julie Liew  
651-259-1917 (office)  
631-605-1166 (cell)

[jliew@flaherty-hood.com](mailto:jliew@flaherty-hood.com)

## **Governor, Senate boost support for LGA**

ST. PAUL—Momentum for an increase to the Local Government Aid (LGA) program continues to build at the Legislature. Yesterday, Gov. Dayton included a \$21.5 million one-time increase in LGA funding as part of his supplemental budget. Then today, Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk, DFL-Cook, confirmed to city leaders that the Senate is standing by its plan to increase ongoing funding for the program.

“The Senate tax bill puts LGA back at 2002 levels. We feel really strongly about that,” Sen. Bakk said, referring to the \$45.5 million in additional LGA funding that the Senate included in its version of the tax bill. He added that it is “unlikely” that a tax bill could pass out of conference committee without that LGA provision in it.

Sen. Bakk discussed LGA and other top Greater Minnesota priorities while addressing 120 city administrators and elected officials from across the state who convened in St. Paul for the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) annual Legislative Action Day. House Speaker Kurt Daudt, R-Crown, had also been expected to speak at the event, but he had to cancel his appearance because the House was in session.

An LGA increase is the top legislative priority for the CGMC this session. More than 75 cities have adopted a resolution in support of the \$45.5 million increase and 17 newspapers have written editorials expressing similar support. Clearly, it was a top focus for the city officials taking part in the Legislative Action Day lobbying activities.

“LGA is absolutely vital to Greater Minnesota communities,” said Robert Broeder, mayor of Le Sueur and president of the CGMC. “Our costs continue to rise, yet LGA funding has not even kept up with inflation. We are asking our legislators to support a modest increase to the program so that our cities can continue to provide key services to our residents and businesses while restraining property taxes.”

In contrast to the Senate’s plan to increase LGA, the Republican-led House is pursuing a tax bill that would cut the LGA program by \$84 million by targeting the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth. While addressing the CGMC crowd, Sen. Bakk urged them not to “take the bait” on the House proposal. He indicated that although it might sound like the House plan would benefit Greater Minnesota cities, in reality it would put the entire LGA program in jeopardy.

“I’ve been around here long enough to know that if LGA is going to become just a rural program, we’ll never hold it,” Sen. Bakk said. “There needs to be a formula where everybody

can fairly participate in it. If you start taking large groups of legislators out of it, it's just not going to be workable going forward.”

Sen. Bakk noted that the conference committee will begin reconciling the differences between the House and Senate versions of the tax bill “in earnest” soon, but he gave no indication that the two bodies are any closer to reaching an agreement today than they were at the end of session last May.

However, Sen. Bakk reiterated that if a tax bill makes it out of the conference committee, it will be a “sensible bill that is going to have LGA in it.”

*The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization representing 85 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).*

###