

MDRA Legislative Update

Monday March 16, 2020

### **STATE LEGISLATIVE LEADERS ANNOUNCE LIMITED SESSION SCHEDULE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY**

Yesterday Minnesota legislative leadership issued a joint bipartisan agreement that for the next four weeks all activity at the capitol will be severely limited with only conducting necessary committee hearings and floor sessions with agendas that are noncontroversial and pre-agreed upon amongst the Speaker of the House and House minority leader with the Senate majority and minority leaders. This action follows Governor Walz's declaration of a state emergency declared late last week and its expansion yesterday to close all K-12 schools statewide no later than Wednesday March 18.

Over the next four weeks, legislators will concentrate only on those matters deemed critical to be completed before their constitutionally mandated adjournment of May 18. Those issues primarily include any additional actions needed to take in response to the virus, a supplemental budget bill, a bonding bill, and possibly a tax bill. However, these measures would still require pre-agreements by all legislative leaders before being advanced.

Lawmakers have taken this action to minimize potential spreading of the virus on the capitol grounds from visiting groups advocating and testifying on their causes. Unfortunately, these limitations also impact our current agenda focused on filing fee increases.

Just prior to the emergency declaration, MDRA had secured a house hearing this week on HF 1008 to advance our filing fee legislation. We will now seek its inclusion within a future supplemental budget bill despite HF 1008's hearing now being cancelled before the house transportation committee. However, the strategy to eventually include this in the supplemental budget bill was always our plan, and that does not change under the circumstances.

Certainly, as we all move forward in these very challenging times, we must do our civic part in responding to the situation at hand. Already some offices have announced their temporary closure due to concerns of overcrowding in lobbies and staff shortages. Please communicate with DVS regarding any closure you declare, and please share that with MDRA as well. For all offices that remain operating, please take proper precautions regarding routine sanitation measures and try to limit the size and seating proximity of your waiting customers.

MDRA legislative updates will keep you informed of developments in this changing landscape at the capitol as we continue to press for increased filing fee needs which predate the current health crisis and now continues exasperated by it and beyond if nothing changes. Please expect a new round of phone call requests targeting our state's four legislative leaders and the governor specific to this critical matter.

Thank you, deputies and stay safe and protected as we endure this serious health challenge while we strive to do our jobs.