



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

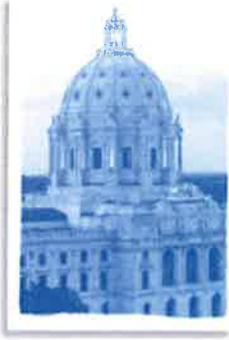
## 3A

Agenda Item #

**Requested Meeting Date:** February 10, 2015

**Title of Item:** Conference Call with Senator Ruud and Representative Lueck

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<b>Action Requested:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <small>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</small>
<b>Submitted by:</b> Nathan Burkett	<b>Department:</b> Administration
<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Nathan Burkett, County Administrator	<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b>
<b>Summary of Issue:</b>  At 9:15 a.m. Senator Carrie Ruud and Representative Dale Lueck will hold a conference call with the Board and discuss legislative issues.  For the 10 minutes or so prior to the phone call, the Board will have time to coordinate the issues they would like to discuss.	
<b>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</b>	
<b>Recommended Action/Motion:</b>	
<b>Financial Impact:</b> <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>	



# Legislative Priorities 2015

*For more than 100 years, the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) has assisted the state's 87 counties in providing effective governance for all citizens.*

## Legislative Principles

- **AMC strives** to preserve local control so that counties have the flexibility to address the most pressing needs of their communities.
- **AMC supports** state budget solutions that avoid adding or shifting a disproportionate burden to counties through cost shifts, cost shares and unfunded mandates.
- **AMC believes** that funding for county-administered services should be commensurate with the level of service or results deemed acceptable.

## 2015 Legislative Action Items

### Environment and Natural Resources

#### Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Banking Bill

AMC supports legislative efforts to improve wetland management and ensure maximum public value for wetland mitigation projects. We support policies that allow for wetland replacement to happen in the areas where they will do the most good, and where they are welcomed by local governments because they assist with flood control and water quality improvements.

### General Government

#### County Program Aid

County Program Aid has experienced great fluctuations in funding throughout the past decade. While last year saw a modest level in increased CPA payments, the funding levels have only recently gone back to their original 2005 levels and are greatly depressed in terms with inflation. In 2000, CPA was equal to 18% of county levies; today, that number hovers around 6%. More specifically, a large number of counties have seen a portion of their aid—Tax-Base Equalization Aid—zeroed out or significantly reduced. While the reliance of CPA differs from county-to-county, there is unanimous support for increased and sustainable state funding.

#### Data Practices

A recent Supreme Court ruling has the potential to impact county employee review processes.

In *Schwanke v. Minnesota Department of Administration*, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that public employees have the right to challenge the content and accuracy of employee evaluations through the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and are entitled to contested hearing cases before the Office of Administrative Hearings. AMC joins in concern with colleagues at the League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Inter-County Association, and Minnesota School Board Association that the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act was never intended to be a platform for employees to challenge employer evaluations. Additionally, AMC is concerned increased contested hearings in front of an Administrative Law Judge could result in expanded legal costs for counties.

## Health and Human Services

### Administrative Simplification Phase II

AMC supports legislation to further simplify eligibility processes for human services programs.

AMC hopes to build on the momentum gained last session in providing simplification, uniformity and alignment of human services programs, while maintaining program integrity. This year's focus will be on definitions of income. Income is currently calculated primarily with an exclusions-based system; there are 67 income exclusions across economic assistance programs. Administrative Simplification Phase II would recommend, instead, an inclusions list with 15 categories of income that would be used to determine eligibility across programs. This would help reduce complexity in the system that now demands significant expenditures of publically funded resources.

### Child Health and Safety Concerns

AMC believes that all children have the right to be safe, and all families have the right to assistance in times of difficulty and need.

In response to concern over the safety of Minnesota's most vulnerable children, Gov. Dayton created the Child Protection Task Force. AMC has representation on the task force and will provide leadership in shaping recommendations from the task force that would further protect Minnesota's children from abuse and neglect.

Whatever recommendations come from the task force, it is critical that AMC asks for additional state funding to support the child protection system. The state of Minnesota ranks in the bottom five in state funding; any additional requirements from the state should be supported financially.

### Restoring the Public Health Block Grant

AMC supports restoring funding to the Local Public Health Grant. The LPH Grant has been a key source of funding for local health departments since 1976. It is the only state investment with flexibility to address growing, community-identified health needs that can vary across the state.

Public health serves are the communities' primary responder to any type of health crisis or outbreak, yet funding for this core function has eroded over the past decade. Past cuts to the grant (including a 29% reduction in 2003) have left local health departments without core staff and with diminished capacity to deliver critical public health services.

## Public Safety

### Probation Funding

County probation services are significantly underfunded currently and the method of delivering funds for these services is broken, with multiple pots of money, including separate funding source for each of the county based delivery systems (CCA and CPO). This system is confusing, not transparent and has contributed to years of underfunding for probation. Funding should be increased and the distribution of those funds streamlined in to a transparent, needs-based system directed to county boards that would use the funds to deliver probation services using any of the three current delivery models.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

### Transportation Funding

AMC supports passage of a significant multi-modal transportation funding package that includes **new revenue**. This package should be comprehensive (multi-modal), balanced (regionally and between modes), sustainable (on-going funding), and dedicated (constitutionally for roads and statutorily for transit). A central part of the proposal would be gas tax reform, new, dedicated revenue to the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) system, as well as the negotiated change to the CSAH funding formula, which ensures all regions benefit from future revenue increases.

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