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Senate

State of Minnesota

August 3, 2020

Commissioner Frans,

In recent conversations and Minnesota Management and Budget's (MMB) July 31st press release, you have indicated that MMB will no longer be honoring its previous commitment to prepare an August Forecast. This decision seems to contradict your earlier comments which suggested that MMB would engage in the work of creating an additional forecast in August to provide a better understanding of the state's expenditures and revenues amidst the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are aware that such action is out of the ordinary and would create additional work for you and your staff. However, in these uncertain times, it is the responsibility of you and your agency to ensure that accurate budget and economic projections are available to help guide decisions related to the state budget. We need to have the appropriate information so that we can work together to balance the state's budget.

We appreciate that last Friday MMB released a revenue update with planning estimates for the FY 2022-23 biennium. However, as you state in the revenue update: "These planning estimates were constructed using the same economic assumptions and modeling as the FY 2020-21 projections that we released as part of the May 2020 Interim Budget Projection." These data are based on April numbers and are already outdated. We need more information and we need the most recent information, data that would be included in a full August Budget and Economic Forecast.

During these unprecedented times, we expect that you and your agency hold up your end of the deal and provide this necessary information to the legislature. We are requesting that you honor your commitment to prepare an August Forecast this year. Without this information, we will be working with outdated and incomplete information that was provided at the May Budget Projection. We should all agree that the most up to date economic and budget information is essential in helping us make informed decisions as we do the work of balancing the state's budget in the coming months.

I appreciate your attention to this letter. I ask that you respond and clearly communicate your commitment to providing an August Forecast.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Rosen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Julie Rosen
Chair, Senate Finance Committee



Senate Majority Leader, Senator Paul Gazelka
Chair, Rules and Administration Committee



Senator Mary Kiffmeyer
Chair, State Government Finance and Policy and Elections Committee



Senator Eric Pratt
Chair, Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee



Senator Scott Newman
Chair, Transportation Finance and Policy Committee



Senator Bruce Anderson
Chair, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee



Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen
Chair, Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee



Senator Carrie Ruud
Chair, Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance Committee



Senator Warren Limmer
Chair, Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee



Senator Carla Nelson
Chair, E-12 Finance and Policy Committee



Senator Gary Dahms,
Chair, Commerce and Consumer Protection Finance and Policy Committee



Senator Torrey Westrom
Chair, Agriculture, Rural Development, and Housing Finance Committee



Senator Michelle Benson
Chair, Health and Human Services Finance and Policy Committee



Senator David Senjem
Chair, Capital Investment Committee



Senator Jim Abeler
Chair, Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee



Senator Roger Chamberlain
Chair, Taxes Committee