FOR USE BY ORGANIZATIONS TO COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

**ADD logo or USE your organization’s letterhead for print letters.**

***Send via email:***

***Address of Lawmaker (optional)***

Dear Commissioner [Last Name of Commissioner],

On behalf of [Your Organization], I ask for your support to protect aging in rural Minnesota by ensuring an [insert topic for consideration] through your public comment in [insert month and year]. The health of older Minnesotans depends upon it. The current [insert topic for consideration] is heavily weighted to 60+ demographics and favors the 7-county metro region. Greater Minnesota needs your voice.

According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, older residents are more common in non-urban areas. Living in rural areas can mean limited options for services such as meal delivery programs, longer time needed for transportation, limited access to technology and resources, and smaller workforce to support programs. Inadequate services can have a negative impact on health, erode quality of life and contribute to rising healthcare costs.

Programs that provide rural services to older adults are at risk of being severely underfunded and not meeting the needs of older Minnesotans. The upcoming proposed changes to the [insert topic for consideration] do not meet the needs of older adults living in Greater Minnesota. Older Americans Act funding is intended to be the payer of last resort. In rural Minnesota it is often the only funder for aging services and older adults depend on it for services like Meals on Wheels, transportation, caregiver respite, and more. Currently, only 2% of all foundation dollars in Minnesota are specifically directed toward aging services. Additionally, 42% of the 2% is allocated to the metro area, leaving less funding for Greater MN. Implications of not having an [insert topic for consideration] include loss of jobs for OAA funded programs, greater population migration to the metro area, and increased admissions to long-term care settings.

**At [Your Organization], we *[how you serve older adults in rural areas, the impact you make and how you see the need increasing.]***

[Your Organization] implores you to prevent cuts to vital services for seniors in the Arrowhead. Please advocate for [insert topic for consideration]**.**

Sincerely,

**[*Name***

***Your job title and organization information***

***Phone number, email (for contact)]***