

Tim Faust
State Representative

District 8B
Isanti, Kanabec and Pine Counties



Minnesota House of Representatives

March 22, 2010

Industries Inc.
500 S Walnut St
Mora, MN 55051

COMMITTEES: VICE-CHAIR, AGRICULTURE, RURAL ECONOMIES AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
AGRICULTURE, RURAL ECONOMIES AND VETERANS AFFAIRS FINANCE DIVISION
K-12 FINANCE DIVISION

Dear Industries Inc. Staff,

Thank you for contacting me about Minnesota's budget challenges. I appreciate having an opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Minnesota is facing a \$994 million deficit for the 2010-2011 biennium and a deficit of \$5.789 billion in the following 2-year cycle. Closing the gap is going to require bipartisan cooperation and creativity. Minnesotans are understandably eager to learn how the Legislature plans to manage the deficit and get our state back on sound economic footing.

As you know, Governor Pawlenty recently released his budget proposal. While I appreciate knowing the Governor's recommendations for managing our deficit, I have some apprehensions about his proposal. In particular, I am concerned that the Governor's proposed cuts are concentrated in higher education, health and human services, and local government funding. Coming on the heels of last year's budget cuts and massive unallotments I am worried that local governments and state agencies will have great difficulty absorbing additional reductions without drastically cutting back services.

Statutorily, Minnesota lawmakers are required to balance the budget. At present, House finance committees are hard at work looking for places where we can pare back state spending. I will be working tirelessly to see that our cuts are made prudently, honestly, and with the least possible harm to essential services.

I share your concern that making reductions to services for disabled persons and the staff that care for them will have negative consequences for many Minnesotans, and I am frustrated at the Governor's continued unwillingness to consider new revenue. In dealing with our immediate budget challenge, the Legislature also needs to begin confronting the structural insolvency of our long-term budget. Strategic budgeting cannot solely consist of deciding how to cut; we need also to consider how Minnesota can invest to ensure the robust economy and vibrant community of our future. This is a challenge I welcome.

Again, thank you for writing. This is going to be a challenging session. I appreciate knowing your priorities as we move forward. I hope you'll continue to share your perspective on these and other important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Faust".

Tim Faust
State Representative

