

August 15, 2005

Governor Tim Pawlenty
Office of the Governor
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Pawlenty:

On behalf of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information, I wish to express thanks for an approved budget that acknowledges concerns about the Land Management Information Center expressed in my February 18 advisory memo to you.

Written in response to the initial budget recommendation, which included a 75 percent reduction in LMIC's funding, I expressed the Council's unanimous opinion that the reduction would jeopardize LMIC's survival. LMIC is an organization that cost-effectively supports GIS programs throughout the state and is critical to the Council's ability to fulfill its mission "to promote efficient and effective use of resources by providing leadership and direction in the development, management and use of geographic information in Minnesota."

The final budget, which maintains a 30 percent budget cut for LMIC, presents a major challenge, but LMIC director David Arbeit has advised us that it will be adequate to maintain essential services, including support for the Council's work. He also has advised us that support for the Minnesota Geographic Data Clearinghouse and LMIC's GIS coordination activities will continue. This is an important result for the state.

We deeply appreciate the tough budget choices that our state's fiscal situation required and are grateful to you and Department of Administration Commissioner Badgerow for working out a compromise that will support LMIC for the next two years. We remain concerned, however, about the budget provision that retains the full 75 percent reduction in LMIC's base budget for the next biennium. This is a problem that we believe needs to be addressed. Minnesota needs a healthy LMIC, which is widely recognized for its service orientation and its effective leadership within Minnesota's GIS community.

Sincerely yours,

Larry Charboneau, Chair
MN Governor's Council on Geographic Information