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STATE OF MINNESOTA

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ARNE H. CARLSON
GOVERNOR

May 15, 1997

The Honorable Phil Carruthers
Speaker of the House of Representatives
463 State Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Speaker Carruthers:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 151, House File 423, a bill which would provide for an elected Metropolitan Council.

The Metropolitan Council is responsible for the important functions of coordinating regional planning, guiding growth and development, and delivering quality services such as wastewater treatment and transit in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The focus of the Metropolitan Council was always on the well-being of the metropolitan area as an entity. The designers had in mind transcending parochial and geographically designated interests. House File 423 flies directly in the face of this original intention.

An elected council would, by design, force council members to be parochial to their own constituents and individual districts, which already have elected representatives in local governments and the Legislature. The current appointment process effectively enables the Governor to construct the council to include a variety of interests and perspectives throughout the entire region. In addition, appointed members are better able to relate to elected officials in a non-competitive manner and respond to the interests and desires of their constituents.

An elected Metropolitan Council would also create another layer of governmental bureaucracy -- one that strains the working partnership between the executive and legislative branches and local elected officials. The creation of another advisory council, as required in this bill, only serves to further encumber the day-to-day operations of the Metropolitan Council.

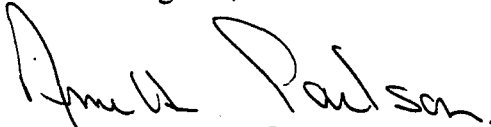
Equally troublesome is the requirement that Metropolitan Council campaigns be financed with council funds. This means that metropolitan property taxes would be used to finance campaigns, raising costs to taxpayers and diverting much needed resources from council operations. With each candidate being eligible for \$20,000 in public financing, the first election could cost as much as \$640,000. In the end, it means more fundraising, more campaigning, and more taxes.

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Finally, many of the criticisms that predicated this legislation are not the result of actions by the Metropolitan Council; rather, they are due to the unabashed willingness of the Legislature to place increased demands and mandates on the council itself. Requiring an elected council will not curtail this trend, only restraint on the part of legislators will. To do otherwise ignores the root of many of the problems raised by supporters of this bill.

An elected Metropolitan Council is about as necessary as another house of the legislature.

Warmest regards,



ARNE H. CARLSON
Governor

- c: Senator Allan Spear, President of the Senate
Senator Roger Moe, Majority Leader
Senator Dean Johnson, Minority Leader
Representative Steve Sviggum, Minority Leader
Chief Senate Author(s)
Chief House Author(s)
Mr. Patrick E. Flahaven, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Edward A. Burdick, Chief Clerk of the House
Ms. Joan Anderson Growe, Secretary of State