



# Southwest Regional Development Commission

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## Summary of Other Legislative Issues of Importance 2009 Legislative Session

### Legislative Committee Recommendations

#### Background

The Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC) is a nine-county Regional Development Commission as established under Minnesota Statute §462.381-462.398 the “Regional Development Act.” The SRDC represents local units of government in Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood and Rock counties. The Legislative Committee of the SRDC has reviewed existing SRDC positions on a number of issues and determined that while these issues are of importance to the SRDC, they may or may not come up in any given legislative session. Therefore, the SRDC has determined that the following issues will be observed for activity in the upcoming session and acted upon as the situation warrants.

#### High Priority Response Issues

- **General Support of Water Projects.** Given the importance of an adequate supply of safe, dependable water, the SRDC generally supports efforts to provide increased availability of quality water throughout the region, including the ability for counties to levy separately for water protection planning.
- **Base Funding for the Centers for Independent Living.** The SRDC supports the efforts of the SW Center for Independent Living to establish in Legislation a base amount of funding for the Centers for Independent Living statewide.
- **Prevailing Wage.** The SRDC supports efforts by the State of Minnesota to utilize data currently already being collected by the Department of Employment and Economic Development to set prevailing wage standards. Prevailing Wage is currently set by surveys completed for the Department of Labor & Industry. The SRDC feels that the data being collected by DEED is far more accurate and presents a more realistic picture of wages in rural Minnesota.
- **Comprehensive Health Coverage.** The SRDC supports a comprehensive plan to ensure that all Minnesotans receive adequate needed health care.
- **Mental Health Funding.** The SRDC supports efforts to increase accessibility to mental health care in rural areas.

#### Other Issues of Importance

- **Statutory Positions.** The SRDC supports giving local units of government the authority to combine and appoint statutory positions to improve local government efficiency.

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- **Solid Waste Issues.** The SRDC supports the efforts of the SW Solid Waste Commission around waste electronics, Inverse Condemnation and the Certificate of Need process.
- **Rural Meth Clean-up.** The SRDC generally supports efforts by the Legislature to provide funding for the clean-up of Meth houses and other environmental hazards posed by methamphetamine production.
- **Natural Resources.** The SRDC supports efforts to expand the deer hunt for disabled hunters in state and county parks. The SRDC also supports efforts to control nuisance species such as coyote and beaver.
- **Township Roads.** The SRDC supports the efforts of the Minnesota Association of Townships to better enforce regulations on township roads.
- **Transit.** The SRDC supports the regionalization of rural transit services and the coordination of transit services between counties and other entities.
- **Rail.** The SRDC supports the rehabilitation and upgrade of rural short line railroads.
- **Programs for the Elderly.** The SRDC supports the continued funding of the Senior LinkAge Line®
- **Workforce Housing.** The SRDC supports funding for workforce housing initiatives.
- **MACPZA.** The SRDC supports the concerns raised in the legislative platform of the Minnesota Association of County Planning and Zoning Administrators.
- **Health Care Reimbursements.** The SRDC supports increasing the reimbursements paid to rural hospitals, nursing home and other care facilities.
- **Renewable Energy.** The SRDC supports the sunset of provisions to regulate 25MW wind projects as small wind (under 5MW) for undelegated counties.

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