

Chairman Bekkedahl and esteemed members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, my name is Jeff Frith. I am honored to serve as a Ramsey County Commissioner and chairman of the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center (LRLEC) board of directors.

I am submitting my testimony today to express my strong support for House Bill 1213. I would appreciate any amendments that would restore the appropriation amount to the original \$200 million.

Permit me to share some insights about the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center (LRLEC). Established in 1973 through a joint powers agreement between the city of Devils Lake and Ramsey County, this facility serves as a correctional institution and a crucial component of our community's safety and well-being. Located in Devils Lake, the LRLEC is a multi-jurisdictional adult correctional facility, with our current building reflecting our long-standing commitment to public safety since its construction in 1974. In its current form, the joint-powers agreement represents a collaborative effort among Ramsey, Benson, Nelson, Eddy Counties, and the City of Devils Lake, highlighting the importance of unity in ensuring public safety.

As representatives of smaller communities, we are acutely aware of the challenges we face in securing funding for essential projects like the LRLEC. We would not be seeking your support if we had the resources to fully finance this endeavor. We are committed to exploring all avenues, including cost reductions, potential downsizing, and even the possibility of raising taxes. However, we recognize that these measures may not suffice, so we respectfully request the state's support to help us maintain the safety and security of our residents.

With that in mind, I kindly urge you to vote in favor of House Bill 1213. I appreciate your consideration.

Jeff Frith

Ramsey County Commissioner – Lake Region Law Enforcement Center
Board of Directors