

## Other Business

Meeting date: March 25, 2020

**Subject:** Proposed Peacetime Emergency Policy and ratification of actions to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the Council workforce and help ensure the operation of essential public services.

**District(s), Member(s):** All Districts

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Minn. Stat. §§ 473.123, 473.125, 473.129; Bylaws art. I.D.10

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Regional Administrator Meredith Vadis, 651-602-1567

**Division/Department:** Offices of the Chair and Regional Administrator

### Proposed Action

That the Council: (1) adopt the attached Peacetime Emergency Policy; and (2) ratify the Regional Administrator's modifications to personnel policies and changes to how certain work of the Council staff is organized; and (3) grant the Regional Administrator, in consultation with the Chair, such other authority as necessary to continue Council operations during the pendency of this peacetime emergency.

### Discussion

On March 13, 2020, Governor Walz issued Emergency Executive Order 20-01 declaring a peacetime emergency in Minnesota in response to the COVID-19. The Executive Order outlined ways the state, in partnership with federal and local governments, can continue to take sensible steps to protect all Minnesotans and slow the spread of COVID-19.

On March 17, 2020, Governor Walz issued Emergency Executive Order 20-07. The Executive Order provides, in part, for the alteration or adjustment of the working hours, workdays and work week of, and annual and sick leave provisions and payroll laws regarding all state employees in the executive branch, as necessary to minimize the impact of the emergency. To the extent practicable, the alternations and adjustment will conform to existing state laws, rules, and collective bargaining agreements.

At the federal level a new law was enacted that expands protection under the federal Family Medical Leave Act and paid sick leave related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To help ensure the continuing operations of essential public services (i.e., public transportation, wastewater treatment, public safety and security functions, and rental housing assistance), the Regional Administrator has implemented changes to how the Council's staff is organized and works. Those changes include broad use of teleworking, staggered work schedules, a COVID-19 leave policy, and modified procedures to address critical technology needs.

These changes were implemented to help ensure essential public services can continue to be provided and to help ensure the health and safety of Council employees and their families. These changes are consistent with the approach outlined in Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-07 which addresses state workforce needs during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. The Regional Administrator implemented these changes in consultation with the Chair.