



Range Association of Municipalities and Schools

Paul Peltier, Executive Director
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2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

RANGE FIRST

- **CRITICAL MINERALS** – RAMS actively opposes all legislation at the local, state, and federal level of government that would restrict the exploration and development of copper, nickel, and precious metal mining in northeastern Minnesota, including NewRange, Twin Metals, and Talon Metals.
- **CAPITAL INVESTMENT (BONDING)** -- RAMS supports the passage of a state capital investment (bonding) bill during the 2024 legislative session and supports that at least 50 percent of the investment be allocated to communities in Greater Minnesota. Further, RAMS advocates for our local governments who have bonding requests in front of the Legislature.
- **LGA** -- RAMS asks the Legislature to protect the hard-won gains in Local Government Aid (LGA), County Program Aid (CPA), and aid to townships.
- **TAX REFORM** -- RAMS supports reform the distribution of the Occupation Tax on taconite and natural iron ore and promotes the expanded use of these funds within the TAA.
- **PROTECT THE DJJ**-- RAMS will work to safeguard our Douglas J. Johnson Economic Protection Trust Fund at the Department of Iron Range Resources.
- **REGULATORY REFORM** -- RAMS recognizes and supports efforts that create a transparent and meaningful regulatory and/or permitting reform process leading to achievable outcomes.

RURAL HEALTHCARE

- **EMS** –Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is not functioning for rural communities. RAMS supports state and federal legislative engagement and action to fix our troubled rural EMS system.
- **INNOVATIVE MODELS** – RAMS supports the work of organizations that advocate for investments and regulatory reforms that enhance regional care systems, telehealth system development and infrastructure, and healthcare workforce development.
- **MENTAL HEALTH** – RAMS supports state investments that increase the capacity of mental health services and increased opportunities for mental health professional workforce.
- **FACILITIES** – RAMS supports innovative programs that would allow investment in rural health care facilities, especially hospitals that serve the needs of geographically diverse populations, Native American communities, lower income, and senior communities. RAMS supports state investments in our nursing homes, especially to assist in training and retaining employees.





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REGIONAL INVESTMENT

- **RURAL SCHOOL AID** – RAMS supports that the Legislature pass a rural school disparity aid package designed to help with workforce, technology, curriculum, transportation, and facilities funding.
- **STABLE SCHOOLS** – RAMS supports: an additional annual increase in the general education formula; that the state fully fund special education for our schools; policy and funding resolution for non-certified unemployment insurance mandates.
- **EFFICIENT SCHOOLS** – RAMS supports: legislative fixes to inequities in assessment and accountability; expanded use of funds for student support personnel aid; policy and financial support for employee safe & sick time, and policy resolution to the SRO and school discipline crisis.
- **HOUSING** – RAMS supports investments and regulatory reforms that aim to reduce the private market cost of developing new affordable, market rate, and workforce housing. RAMS also supports investments that will increase opportunities to revitalize existing housing stock and for senior citizens to access housing that meets their care and life needs.
- **BROADBAND** – RAMS supports: the development of a regional broadband strategy to leverage federal investment; increasing Border-to-Border grant cap to 90%; fully funding and making the Low-Density Pilot program permanent; additional assistance for site-specific considerations.
- **TRAILS** – RAMS supports: Building additional recreational trails for residents and visitors (mountain bike, Mesabi Trail, ATV trails, and snowmobile trails); additional investment by the Minnesota Legislature, Department of Iron Range Resources, Legislative-Citizens-Commission on Minnesota Resources, and Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission that develops more of these trails and opportunities to access natural, educational, and recreational opportunities in northeastern Minnesota.
- **CHILDCARE** – RAMS supports: investments and regulatory reforms that allow childcare providers to operate financially sustainable childcare businesses while maintaining a commitment to safe and nurturing environments for young learners; efforts to build a stable, high quality, diverse, and equitably compensated childcare workforce that develops and retains workers.
- **WORKFORCE** – RAMS supports: efforts that enhance partnerships between education providers, local employers, and communities to help grow our workforce; including efforts that enhance and reimagine workforce training—both employer-based and credentialed training— and mitigates achievement gaps equitably in all corners of the state; Programs that encourage worker relocation to areas of need, or that reduce the barriers that workers face—such as lack of housing or childcare—in relocating to a new community.
- **TAX FOREFITURE** – RAMS supports legislative action to resolve the tax forfeiture issues related to the “Tyler vs Hennepin” court case, which threatens mineral, timber, and recreational lands in northern Minnesota counties, with the Legislature’s goal aimed at preserving the present financial benefits to our local county land departments.

