



*Working to protect the Mississippi River
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.*

101 East Fifth Street
Suite 2000
Saint Paul, MN 55101

651-222-2193
www.fmr.org
info@fmr.org

January 23, 2017

Senator David H. Senjem, Chair
Senate Capital Investment Committee
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3401
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Dean Urdahl, Chair
House Capital Investment Committee
473 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Senator Senjem and Representative Urdahl:

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a non-profit organization that engages citizens and stakeholders to protect restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities Region. We have 2,300 members and thousands of volunteers who care deeply about the river.

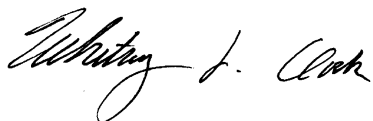
FMR supports the Minnesota Historical Society's capital budget request for \$34 million to revitalize Historic Fort Snelling. This project aligns with our mission and will greatly enhance the visitor experience at this very significant river site. This project will allow for a more complete telling of the human stories at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers and help to attract even more Minnesotans to enjoy this part of the river.

Fort Snelling is arguably one of the most significant historical, cultural and geological places in the State of Minnesota and it deserves these much-needed improvements. We are especially supportive of the proposed improvement since it enhances how visitors will experience the river. This dramatic site atop the bluff is currently underutilized, with the visitor center and wayfinding drawing most visitors away from a view of the river. A visitor center in Building 18, a historic cavalry barracks, can provide a great view and improved interpretation of the river that is not possible in the current subterranean space.

Equally important, with demolition of the current center and improvements to the wayfinding, visitors will be encouraged to more directly experience the river on their approach to the new visitor center and the historic fort. With your support, this project will transform how visitors experience the river.

The Minnesota Historical Society's full \$34 million request for design and construction must be approved this year for the revitalization to be ready in time for Historic Fort Snelling's fast approaching 2020 bicentennial. As advocates for the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities, we wholeheartedly support funds for the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Whitney L. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and a distinct 'L'.

Whitney L. Clark
Executive Director