



June 2024

Hello friends and neighbors –

I hope this message finds you and your family doing well. This is my Capitol Report to you for 2024, letting you know what happened this legislative session, and what didn't. As always, I loved the work and was honored to represent our District 18 in the Senate.

This past two-year biennium saw historic success at the legislature. We passed bills supporting schools, reproductive freedoms, democracy, public safety, small businesses, children, working men and women, and a lot more. The state's economy is in solid shape with unemployment at a 50 year low, and business and personal incomes at all-time highs. Minnesota now boasts a AAA credit rating, which saves us millions of dollars each year in borrowing costs.

However, not *all* of our work got done this past session – the two parties failed to find agreement on a bonding bill.

My own senate workload has never been heavier. I chair the Energy, Utilities, Environment and Climate committee, and serve as the vice chair for both the Finance and Pension committees. I also serve on the Commerce, Rules, and Bonding committees. My work as Senate Assistant Majority Leader is gratifying, but this year really fit the saying “never a dull moment.”

I'm glad to be back home in North Mankato, and to get to spend some time with family and friends. Nevertheless, my Senate work continues. Please contact me with comments, questions, or concerns. Meanwhile, take care!

Nick



On the Senate floor with some teammates: Researcher Cassie Tommerdahl, Legislative Assistant Travis Urness, and Committee Administrator Justin Emmerich.

Sen. Frentz Successes

Energy Permitting Reform (SF4784)

As chief author of the MN Energy Infrastructure Permitting Act, I wanted the bill to reflect the broad consensus among stakeholders. It will cut down permitting time up to 20% for new generation and transmission. This will be a big help to get more clean energy deployed faster.

Pensions Omnibus (HF5040)

The Pensions commission received a supplemental budget this year of \$31 million. These resources were invested in teachers' retirement accounts and helped make improvements for volunteer firefighters, corrections officers, and others.

Anti-Price Gouging Bill (HF3526)

This legislation prevents “storm chasing” – defined as price gouging in weather emergencies. This should help keep Minnesotans' homeowners insurance costs lower.

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State Senator  
Nick Frentz  
2024  
CAPITOL  
REPORT



## 2024 Session Highlights

### Tax Bill (HF5247)

#### YES Vote

I supported the bill for an important reason – the new MN Child Tax Credit. The credit lifts as many as one-third of children out of poverty. It provides up to \$1,750 per child for eligible families. Since February, this has already provided \$321 million of benefits to these Minnesota families. It is now also possible to receive benefits during the tax year, as opposed to having to wait until April of the following year.

### Energy & Agriculture Omnibus (SF4942)

#### YES Vote

The Energy & Agriculture Omnibus bill advances our clean energy economy forward. It also invests in meaningful agriculture policy, including research, soil health funding, and nitrate reduction in Southeastern Minnesota.

### Environment Bill (SF3631)

#### YES Vote

The Environment Omnibus invests in our parks and various outdoor projects while protecting our natural resources. It also sets up new waste management systems that will help reduce the volume of plastic packaging and decrease landfill use.

### Human Services Bill (SF4399)

#### YES Vote

The bill provided targeted relief to communities, caregivers, and people who access disability services. This includes rural families living with relatives who have complex mental health needs, people moving from congregate care facilities back to home, and more.

### Transportation Bill (HF5242)

#### YES Vote

We are funding roads and bridges, an ongoing need every year. We also struck a deal between Uber + Lyft drivers and their employers to give drivers a raise while keeping the companies in Minnesota.

### Judiciary & Public Safety (HF5216)

#### YES Vote

The bill makes strong investments in our Department of Corrections and judicial system budgets. It also contains provisions to prevent and reduce copper wire theft, a problem in many of our cities.



### Highway 14 Ribbon Cutting

**Proud to join Governor Walz, Sen. Klobuchar, Lt. Governor Flanagan, and many more at the November 2023 ceremony celebrating the new four-lane connection from Nicollet to New Ulm. As the chief author of the bill that made this possible – and someone who drives on Hwy 14 almost every day – I could not be more grateful to see this completed.**



*The beautiful Minnesota River divides downtown Mankato from North Mankato. Senate District 18 is home to just under 90,000 Minnesotans, and also includes the cities of St. Peter, Eagle Lake, Nicollet, Courtland, Kasota, Skyline, and Lafayette, as well as 15 rural townships in Nicollet, Blue Earth, and LeSueur Counties.*

### Local Impact Legislation

#### Mankato Schools Absenteeism Program (HF5237)

This pilot program provides \$398,000 to Mankato area schools to study and improve student attendance. The program will address which methods produce the most improvement in student attendance and will engage families, teachers, and communities.

#### Hotel Reclassification (SF4820)

I chief authored this bill at the request of a local boutique hotel operator. It allows a change in definition for “hotels” to allow a liquor license for smaller venues.

#### READ ACT Funding (HF5237)

The READ ACT is a critical literacy education initiative. Our students need to master the basics to give them the best chance to build strong reading skills. The bill provides \$47 million to support teacher efforts to implement the READ ACT.

#### Bonding Bill DID NOT GET PASSED

“Bonding” is state borrowing for larger projects and then paying off the loans with taxpayer money over time. It requires both parties to provide “yes” votes.

The failure to reach a deal meant that important local projects did not receive funding. We need to do better.



*Testimony in my Energy committee on the Permitting Reform bill. This was passed as part of the Energy & Ag Omnibus bill.*

### Senate Energy Committee Summary

About a third of my work this session revolved around being the chair of the Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee. Minnesotans expect their energy to be clean, reliable, and affordable. In addition to the MN Energy Infrastructure Permitting Act, we accomplished a lot:

- **Energy Omnibus Budget (SF4942)** This supplemental budget appropriates an additional \$1 million towards studies on carbon free energy technology (namely geothermal site mapping), and an additional \$15 million dollars from the Renewable Development Account towards projects in Xcel Energy territory, including geothermal heat infrastructure for Sabathani Community Center and innovative new forms of carbon-free transportation.

There is also considerable support in the bill for solar and wind energy production and maintenance. This will help us meet our 2040 goals.