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This year is a bonding year at the Minnesota Capitol. This is when the Legislature authorizes the state to sell bonds to raise money for public construction projects to benefit the entire state. These investments can help build and preserve public buildings, fuel local economic development, and provide safe water and roads. Investment in public infrastructure projects will create the needed economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and keep Minnesota's communities working.

Townships, cities, counties and state agencies have requested over \$5 billion in unmet needs that could fund over 500 public construction projects across our state. While not all of these projects will get funded, a strong bonding bill will create the stimulus we need to strengthen Minnesota's economy during these difficult times.

Bonding is a valuable economic development tool to fund our state's economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. In our region, construction professionals will be ready to take on these new infrastructure projects safely. Construction workers and their contractors are committed to high quality, family sustaining jobs and ensuring that going to work is safe for workers, their families and our community.

What does a state bonding package mean to us locally? There are more than \$88 million worth of bonding projects proposed for our region. For example, \$17 million has been requested for the Minnesota State University Moorhead's Weld Hall building. The Weld Hall renovation will preserve the oldest and most distinguished building on campus and will give the building a 21st century upgrade by addressing code requirements, providing energy efficient building systems and creating state of the art teaching environments. Renovated classrooms will serve over 1,600 students in English, music, film, theater and publishing. The renovation will foster faculty-student engagement and promote interactive workshop-style classes while creating collaborative teaching spaces. The bonding money

from the state will keep our community working and attract visitors that will help the local economy.

In funding this and other projects, the Legislature should consider a balanced approach to funding building, water and transportation infrastructure. This will allow the state to maximize its bonding power to provide ongoing economic stimulus to the areas of our state that need it most.

In these final weeks of the legislative session, the Minnesota Legislature has an opportunity to both provide the state with an economic recovery package and help communities like Moorhead and our region prosper. Our legislators can support our community by developing a bonding plan that keeps local people working and funds the critical infrastructure that our local communities and the state need.

Lende, Erskine, Minn., is president of NW Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council