

Good afternoon. Thank you Matt.

I can't tell you how proud I am of my commissioners and my staff.

Two years ago when we first started to develop a policy agenda, I knew I didn't like the fundamental structure of the tax system in Minnesota and I set out to change it.

I knew enough about our total tax system that I had strong feelings it was not only unfair and susceptible to political manipulation, but in need of updating to be more efficient in the new economy.

My experience as a citizen taxpayer and as a mayor has served as a catalyst for me to developing very strong feelings about our tax system.

And you know what? It isn't just me. A lot of other Minnesotans have similar feelings.

My instincts were right.

And so we went forward to develop a plan. A *Big Plan*.

And our effort to change the fundamental concepts of how we tax, who we tax, what taxes we most rely on and how much we tax, not only became a big part of that *Big Plan*, it has now led us into a new era of taxation in Minnesota.

While many leaders-leaders with great knowledge of the details of our taxing systems-have tried to change the system over the years it just never got done.

To those leaders I say thanks. Thanks for keeping the dream alive. Thanks for the debates, thanks for insight, thanks for never giving up.

But most of all I say thanks to my cabinet. Thanks to my staff. Thanks to the advocates of tax fairness and tax reform. Thanks for believing that this *Big Tax Plan* could become a reality.

To Commissioner Matt Smith-Thanks for the details. Thanks for your brilliance. Thanks for your quiet assurance. Thanks for your confidence.

To Commissioner Pam Wheelock-Thanks for your loyalty. Thanks for your moxie. Thanks for your tenacity.

And finally Pam, we know these past few weeks have been a difficult time for you personally-thank you for putting the peoples work above your own needs.

Thanks to my staff, thanks to my family, and thanks to the people for helping me to lead a tax revolution in Minnesota.

And thanks to the legislature who overwhelmingly voted to approve this measure. There are 201 legislators (some might say that's quite a lot) and amazingly 172 of them voted for this bill. (With that kind of support it makes you wonder why it took so long to get it done.)

I know that some will continue to say that I am not engaged, but there is a group of six people that I must have had about 200 meetings with in the last six months.

I want to thank the group of six.

But this is an order:

When I come down the steps at the Governor's residence next week I don't want to see you sitting around my dining room table.

There is a lot of change in this bill. It is historic and bold right down to the last detail.

Tax relief and tax reform. I've said it so many times.

But it is a *Big Plan* and I know that my chief of staff is already looking ahead. Rest assured, come Monday Steven Bosacker will be at work at six in the morning making plans for the next *Big Plan* agenda.

But that's good. Because you can be assured that I am not done yet.

Thank you.

I will now sign the bill and then take a few questions.