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TO: Members of the Legislative Commission
on Planning and Fiscal Policy

FROM: Jill M. Schultz, Senate Research

RE: Minnesota's Legislative Building Commission

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* Because of difficulties the legislative and executive branches experienced putting together a capital budget in 1955, an interim building commission was created to study the state's building needs. The group returned to the Legislature in 1957 and recommended it create a permanent body to carry on the work, and the Legislative Building Commission (LBC) was born.

* From its creation until it was abolished in 1973, the LBC was the main player in the state's capital budgeting process.

* The commission was comprised of five Senators and five House members who for the most part were the chairs of the divisions of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees. The minority party of each house was also represented on the commission and the Commissioner of Administration was an ex officio member.

* The commission made a list of all proposed state building projects and spent the interim between the biennial sessions traveling the state and making site visits to all of them.

* The commission had a rule that no appropriation for a project could be included in a bill unless the site had been visited, which gave legislative leaders a right to say no to an appropriation request that came up on short notice. Typically it took four to six years from the first time the commission visited the project until it recommended the project for planning.

* The LBC submitted its recommendations to the Legislature and through the Department of Administration, to the

Governor. The Governor would approve or modify the recommendations and they became his capital bonding bill. With very few exceptions, governors incorporated the LBC recommendations intact into their bill.

* The LBC bonding bills typically had the support of the Governor and key members of both houses' money committees and faced little opposition in the Legislature.

* The LBC was abolished in 1973 and its responsibilities were transferred to the chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees. A variety of reasons have been given for its demise such as a decreasing need to build state buildings because of lower population growth and declining enrollments, and the displeasure of some with specific projects which received LBC approval.

* The LBC closely fits one of the National Conference of State Legislature's reform suggestions.

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