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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

State Auditor Otto Releases Report on Local Government Lobbying Costs

~ Local government lobbying costs increased 10.7 percent between 2006 and 2007 ~

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ST. PAUL (09/18/2008) – State Auditor Rebecca Otto today released a comprehensive report that shows the costs of lobbying services provided to Minnesota local governments and their associations for calendar year 2007. The report is intended to inform Minnesota citizens and policy makers of the amount spent by their local government on lobbying services.

According to reports filed with the Office of the State Auditor, local governments in Minnesota spent a total of \$7,817,620 on lobbying activities in 2007. This represents an increase of \$754,113 or 10.7 percent from the amount spent in 2006.

Sixty-five local governments (two more than in 2006) directly employed or hired contract lobbyists in 2007. These local governments spent a total of \$3,582,782 on staff and contract lobbyists. This was \$439,720, or 14.0 percent, more than in 2006. Staff and contract lobbyists are paid to provide information to policy makers to influence legislative, administrative, or official actions regarding governmental units in Minnesota. These expenditures do not include dues and membership fees paid to local government associations.

In addition to the \$3.6 million paid directly to staff and contract lobbyists, local governments paid dues of \$10,024,137 in 2007 to local government associations that also represented their interests before the legislature. These associations spent \$4,234,838 on lobbyists and lobbying in 2007. This represents an increase of 8.0 percent over 2006. Of the \$4.2 million spent on lobbyists and lobbying, \$3,895,819 was funded exclusively through dues. This represents an increase of 10.7 percent over the \$3,520,235 in association dues that were spent on lobbying activities in 2006.

For the complete report, which includes tables and graphs, go to
http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/reports/gid/2007/lobby/lobby_07_report.pdf.

The Office of the State Auditor is a constitutional office that is charged with overseeing more than \$20 billion spent annually by local governments in Minnesota. The Office of the State Auditor does this by performing audits of local government financial statements, and by reviewing documents, data, reports, and complaints reported to the Office. The financial information collected from local governments is analyzed and is the basis of statutory reports issued by the Office of the State Auditor.

Rebecca Otto is Minnesota's 18th State Auditor. A high-resolution official photo is available for download at http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/images/otto_hires.jpg. To learn more about State Auditor Otto, see <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=bio>.