



March 22, 2018

Governor Dayton:

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to Minnesota's water quality. From local implementation of conservation to making government more efficient in how we manage it, you've made it a priority to support and accelerate local, common sense solutions.

The Association of Minnesota Counties, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts share your commitment. We want to emphasize three areas where legislation that comes to your desk for signature will be good for Minnesota's water and Minnesotans:

1. Coordinated Water Management (HF3908/SF3647)

This bill contains some technical improvements to the Clean Water Legacy Act and provides for coordinated water management. Your water Town Halls last summer highlighted specific opportunities for action and solutions. Additionally, for several years we have partnered for better water management through a group called the Local Government Water Roundtable. We have previously worked to pass legislation that led to "One watershed/One plan." This year, we have spearheaded a bi-partisan authorship approach of a coordinated water management bill. We believe it directly meets your call for cleaner water faster – and would appreciate your support for its passage.

2. Drainage efficiencies (HF3836/SF3410)

The members of the Drainage Work Group (which includes agriculture groups, environmental groups, representatives from our local governments, state agencies, practitioners, and legislators) work by consensus – which means only those items which are not opposed make it into legislative proposals. The consensus language in this bill modifies drainage law to accelerate ditch buffer strip implementation and will help meet buffer initiative goals.

3. Clean Water Fund payback

Last session's provision that, pending a positive budget forecast, \$22 million shall be returned to the Clean Water Fund (CWF) from the General Fund, was an important recognition of how Clean Water Funds must continue to focus on on-the-ground implementation. The \$22 million local capacity shift from the general fund has now been restored to the CWF. Your expectation - noted at the end of session - that these returned funds should go towards implementation efforts (including MN CREP) is an important step. We fully support using the Clean Water Fund payback funds for local project implementation that actually moves the needle towards a "25x25" improvement in water quality. We support the Clean Water Council's supplemental

budget recommendations on how to appropriate these funds, which are also in line with local project implementation.

We look forward to continued work with you and your administration this session.

Association of Minnesota Counties

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts

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Anna Henderson, Water Policy Advisor

Rep. Peter Fischer, chief author HF3908, coordinated water management

Sen. Mark Johnson, chief author SF3647, coordinated water management

Rep. Dan Fabian, chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee

Rep. Bob Gunther, chair, House Legacy Funding Finance Committee

Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen, Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee

Sen. Carrie Ruud, Senate Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance Committee