

The Clean Water Fund created by the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment “may be spent only to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation, and...to protect drinking water sources.”

(Minn. Constitution, Art. XI, Sec. 15).

Re: Clean Water Fund appropriations

February 20, 2017

Dear Members of the Minnesota State Legislature,

We write to express our support for the adoption of the Clean Water Council’s FY18-19 Clean Water Fund recommendations to the Legislature. **We believe this package will provide needed funding for a range of activities that will produce the needed science and information as well as on-the-ground implementation to protect and restore Minnesota’s lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater.**

In 2008, Minnesota voters overwhelmingly approved the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment, providing 25 years of constitutionally-dedicated funding for clean water, habitat, parks and trails, and the arts. Cleaning up and protecting Minnesota’s lakes, rivers and streams was overwhelmingly the top reason voters cited for supporting this amendment.ⁱ One third of these Legacy funds are constitutionally directed to the Clean Water Fund for the purposes of protecting, enhancing and restoring Minnesota’s water resources.

Minnesota’s Clean Water Council (CWC) is charged with recommending to the governor and the legislature how money from the clean water fund should be appropriated.ⁱⁱ In addition to supporting the package due to its value to our state’s water, there are several reasons we support the Council’s recommendations based on their good process:

1. The 28-member Council includes citizens with water resources expertise to represent organizations with a major role in achieving clean water in Minnesota, legislative members, in addition to members from state agencies, the University of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council.
2. In January 2016, the Clean Water Council adopted a rigorous slate of guiding principles and funding priorities used in evaluating and recommending Clean Water Fund appropriations.
3. The Council has made a deliberate effort to make their recommendations process inclusive and transparent for all stakeholders. This effort has been well-received by stakeholders, and demonstrates the Council’s commitment to a fair and objective recommendations process.
4. The legislature has traditionally relied on the expertise of the Council’s legislative and nonlegislative stakeholders to craft science-based, non-partisan Clean Water Fund recommendations.

For the reasons outlined above we urge you to support the FY18-19 recommendations of the Clean Water Council to protect the intent of the Legacy Amendment as it was passed by the voters of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

The Following Organizations (listed on the reverse side of this page)

Audubon Minnesota

Conservation Minnesota

Ducks Unlimited

Freshwater Society

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

Friends of the Mississippi River

Friends of the Minnesota Scientific Natural Areas

Land Stewardship Project

Lower Phalen Creek Project

Lutheran Advocacy - Minnesota

Mankato Area Environmentalists

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Conservation Federation

Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America

Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Minnesota Native Plant Society

Minnesota Ornithologists Union

MOHA

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota

Pheasants Forever

Save Lake Superior Association

Save Our Sky Blue Waters

The Nature Conservancy

The Trust for Public Land

ⁱ Lake Research statewide poll of 700 registered voters, November 2008

ⁱⁱ Minn. Stat. § 114D.30 Subd.6 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=114D&view=chapter#stat.114D.30.6>)