



Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

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Projected budget surplus repays \$22 million raid on Clean Water Fund

SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA – The projected \$329 million general fund budget surplus announced Wednesday has resulted in repayment of \$22 million to the Minnesota Clean Water Fund. This money, paid for by Minnesota taxpayers as part of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, is once again available to invest in improvements to Minnesota’s water quality.

During the 2017 Legislative session, \$22 million from the Legacy Amendment’s Clean Water Fund was allocated to pay for the operational costs of Soil and Water Conservation District offices in Minnesota. Soil and Water Conservation Districts do critically important work and were previously funded by general fund dollars. The use of Legacy Clean Water Fund dollars drained \$22 million from the pool of money Minnesota voters dedicated to new investments in water quality as part of the Legacy Amendment that passed in 2008.

As part of the final budget settlement, Gov. Mark Dayton insisted on a provision that would replenish the Clean Water Fund if a budget surplus was projected. Legislators involved in the repayment also deserve recognition for their work to ensure the repayment of the Clean Water Fund. They include Rep. Paul Torkelson, Rep. Leon Lillie, Sen. Carrie Ruud and Sen. Chris Eaton, who were instrumental in including the repayment provision in the final 2017 budget bill.

“It was important to repay the taxpayers of Minnesota for this \$22 million raid on the Clean Water Fund,” stated Kathryn Hoffman, Chief Executive Officer of MCEA. “The legislature now has the opportunity to use these funds for projects on the ground that protect and restore our drinking water, lakes, rivers, and streams. We thank Governor Dayton and legislators for upholding the will of Minnesota voters and returning these funds for their intended use. We look forward to the recommendations of the Clean Water Council on how they can be best used.”

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy is a nonprofit organization using law, science, and research to protect Minnesota’s natural resources, wildlife and the health of its people.

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