



UPPER MISSISSIPPI DRINKING WATER PROTECTION HF 190 & SF 297

WHAT THE BILL PROPOSES

This bill defines an Upper Mississippi River Source Water Protection Area and allocates money from the general fund to the Pollution Control Agency, Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture for drinking water protection. This includes testing of source water and finished drinking water, and identification and implementation of related protections in rule and guidance.

BACKGROUND

Approximately 1 million Minnesotans rely on the Mississippi River basin for safe drinking water. However, Minnesota's drinking water sources are becoming more polluted. HF 190 and SF 297 are proposing a way to ensure the Mississippi River basin remains a safe source of drinking water for the thousands of Minnesotans that depend on it. Furthermore, the bill's appropriations are modest when consideration for the importance of the work funded is taken into account, and when compared to the amounts of state funding used for (arguably) lower priority efforts.

MCEA POSITION

MCEA strongly supports this legislation because it directly addresses several threats to the protection of safe drinking water from the Mississippi River basin. These problems include:

- Lack of testing for pesticides, nitrates, and other endocrine-disrupting chemicals in source waters;
- Lack of water quality standards that protect aquatic life and human health;
- A widespread failure to incorporate drinking water protections into guidance, rule, and watershed restoration and protection efforts.

The bill's priorities are very well aligned with those of the Clean Water Legacy Act (2006; MN Stat. 114D), which enjoyed bi-partisan sponsorship.

