

## **Vote NO on HF888 (Fabian): the Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources Finance bill**

### **HF888 Would Roll Back Minnesota's Long-Standing Environmental Protections, Cause Delay, and Attack Agency Science**

HF 888 would roll back water quality and other environmental protections that have served our state well since the 1970s. This bill is an attack on science, on environmental agencies, on public participation in public decisions, and on established traditions for administrative appeals.

The bill's message: hurry-up with issuing permits, but not so fast with standards to protect human health and the environment. Short-term financial gain is prioritized over the public's rights to clean air, clean water and abundant wildlife habitat. All while not providing agencies the resources they need to overcome these new hurdles. Is this really "streamlining"? No, much of it will only accomplish delay.

#### **At Risk from Rollbacks are:**

- Scientific standards and environmental review, meant to prevent unacceptable risks to human health and the environment;
- Laws to protect water quality, such as the 2015 buffer requirement;
- The comprehensive work of the Environmental Quality Board; and
- Established legal process to ensure fair enforcement of environmental laws.

#### **Undermining Bedrock Environmental Laws and Agencies**

- Guts the Environmental Quality Board by removing its environmental duties and focusing it entirely on serving the interests of business;
- Puts pollution dischargers in charge of environmental review – lets the fox in the hen house;
- Eliminates public's right to administrative hearing for mining projects; and
- Places unfunded mandates on environmental agencies.

#### **Narrowing of Buffer Protections**

- Exempts about 200,000 acres and 24,000 miles of watercourses from buffer requirement, further lessening the law's water quality and habitat benefits;
- Unfairly requires the public to pay for 100% of the pollution problem caused by farm fields in the future ; and
- Delays buffer implementation, despite BWSR and SWCD reports that implementation is 60 to 100% complete in most counties; and
- Fails to provide basic buffer implementation funding to local governments.

#### **Delaying Compliance with Water Quality Standards, in violation of federal law.**

- Exempts polluters that build new facilities from having to meet future standards for clean water; and
- Allows this new "right to pollute" for 16 years, even when the data shows a facility is violating water quality standards.

### **Sore Loser Provisions: Delaying Resolution of Permit Disputes.**

- Upsets established administrative review of water quality decisions, allowing parties who don't get their way to demand an expensive re-do;
- Imposes new and expensive burdens on Administrative Law Judges to make broad scientific decisions on threats to public health and the environment (Hint: This is a job for scientists, not lawyers); and
- Invites more litigation to try to overturn decisions already made in PCA rulemaking and upheld by administrative judges and the Court of Appeals.

### **Undermining Groundwater Protections and Sustainability efforts**

- Requires reductions in groundwater feeding calcareous fens - very rare and sensitive natural areas;
- Pushes science to the backseat by requiring water use permits be issued to special interests; and
- Cuts funding to local governments for groundwater monitoring and assistance to farmers for efficient irrigation.

### **Cutting Resources Important to all Minnesotans, that Protect Public Health and our Way of Life**

- Businesses are hurt by insufficient resources to efficiently issue permits;
- Pollution prevention and mitigation by local governments is hampered;
- Reduced funding to combat invasive species will affect sportsmen and women; and
- The bill provides inadequate funding for the basic tools to protect groundwater resources for our communities, our ecosystems, and future generations.

### **Undermining Local Control and Community Input**

- Preempts local government leadership to improve waste management and protect local quality of life.

These are extreme proposals that fundamentally change how agencies, administrative judges, and permitted facilities do business and would undermine the structure of environmental protections that Minnesotans have enjoyed for the past four generations.

**VOTE NO! HF888 is wrong for Minnesota and at odds with science. It would actually encourage litigation, create public health risks, shut out the public, and slow down our work to clean up lakes, rivers, and streams.**

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