



## Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

April 20, 2020

Dear Chair Hansen and House Environment Finance Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity for the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (“MCEA”) to provide written testimony in support of HF 4498, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (“ENRTF”) appropriations bill. MCEA is a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota’s environment and the health of its people.

Since its establishment in 1988, MCEA has been a strong advocate of the ENRTF, and the many important projects it has funded over the years. As a public interest legal organization, we are particularly interested in ensuring all ENRTF appropriations are constitutional. In recent years, there have been attempts to pass unconstitutional uses of the ENRTF into law, by including projects that are specifically excluded by the constitutional language adopted by voters. Upon review, MCEA is pleased to see that HF 4498, and the A-3 amendment, does not include any unconstitutional appropriations.

MCEA supports HF 4498, as amended, because it includes projects that will protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota’s “air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources” for the benefit of current Minnesotans and future generations. Without going into an exhaustive list, below are examples of projects included this bill address water pollution, restore aquatic habitat, respond to invasive species, enhance climate resiliency and reduce greenhouse gas pollution, and work toward environmental justice:

### **Cleaning-Up Pollution:**

- \$849,000.00 to the Science Museum of Minnesota to analyze the conditions causing nutrient loading in pristine Minnesota lakes that experience algal blooms.
- \$425,000.00 to the University of Minnesota to study how several types of common microplastics transport contaminants of concern in Minnesota waters.
- \$1,000,000.00 to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and \$250,000.00 to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to develop strategies and test new technology to combat water pollution from PFAS.

### **Restoring Habitat:**

- \$191,000.00 to the Minnesota Zoological Garden to develop community-based strategies to improve water quality and native mussel health across the state.
- \$1,800,000.00 to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to restore lost habitat and reintroduce mussels in the Mississippi River above St. Anthony Falls.
- \$900,000 to the Board of Soil and Water Resources for demonstration projects that provide “Lawns to Legumes” grants or payments to plant residential lawns with native vegetation and pollinator-friendly forbs and legumes to protect a diversity of pollinators.

**Using the law and science to defend Minnesota’s environment.**

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### **Invasive Species:**

- \$110,000.00 to the University of Minnesota to study how well boat-cleaning methods work, develop a risk assessment, and to provide recommendations for improving boat-launch cleaning stations to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.
- \$197,000.00 to the Science Museum of Minnesota to evaluate the spread, origin, cause, and economic and ecological threat of didymoformation in North Shore streams and Lake Superior.

### **Climate Resiliency and Reducing Greenhouse Gases:**

- \$250,000.00 to the University of Minnesota to analyze the potential of adding a flow battery and solar energy generation to the University of Minnesota Morris's existing renewable-energy-intensive microgrid.
- \$130,000.00 to the Department of Natural Resources to prevent food from going to landfills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping businesses donate unsold prepared food to food shelves.

### **Environmental Justice:**

- \$500,000.00 to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for 10,000 underserved youth to explore and improve local waterways using a place-based and hands-on environmental education program.
- \$500,000.00 to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to provide paid internships and apprenticeships for diverse young people to learn about careers in the conservation field.
- \$375,000.00 to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to connect 375 underserved and diverse urban and suburban teens to environmental sciences in the natural world through canoeing and learning expeditions.

Again, this is not a complete list of the many important projects in HF 4498 that MCEA supports, but rather, is meant to highlight projects that will benefit all Minnesotans and inform our support of this bill. In conclusion, we urge you to support HF 4498, as amended. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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