



May 1, 2012

Dear Governor Dayton,

As you know, this Legislature has made a number of efforts to weaken environmental protections in this state. Your staff and staff from the MPCA, DNR, and BWSR have done a great deal to eliminate most of the worst proposals, and we appreciate those efforts.

As we appear to be nearing the end of the legislative session, however, there are three bills before you which open the door to serious erosion of Minnesota's environmental safeguards.

HF 2164 - Omnibus Environmental Policy bill (McNamara/Ingebrigtsen)

This bill does very little to protect the environment. There is a ban on open-air manure lagoons and some small enhancements in aquatic invasive species management which could be helpful. But, for the most part, this bill is a collection of rollbacks, some minor, but three which are potentially significant:

- New advisory inspections: At a time when continual budget and staff cuts make enforcement less and less effective, this bill creates even more competition for those scarce agency resources with the 11th-hour addition of an "advisory inspection" section. This was not heard in committee, and, while there may be merit to the concept, this has not received the kind of public vetting that such an important policy change requires.
- Wetland Conservation Amendment (WCA) changes: The expansion of the exemptions that were in earlier versions of the bill has been whittled down, but there is no compelling case for expanding WCA exemptions at all, at least not without careful consideration by the involved stakeholders. The grant of unilateral authority to BWSR to enter into memoranda of understanding with NRCS that could reduce WCA's applicability may not be a major concern with the current board and staff, but a future BWSR less concerned with wetlands protection would be able to do real damage without any guidelines to constrain its actions.
- Elimination of policy to discourage water diversion: This is a step backward in providing clear state policy on not diverting Minnesota water to other states or Canada.

We urge you to **VETO** this legislation.

HF 203—Legislative Approval of Rules (Senjem/Westrom)

This bill requires the legislature to approve any rules that would cost a business or a municipality with less than 25 full-time staff more than \$10,000. The authority of the executive branch to adopt reasonable and necessary administrative rules to implement state and sometimes federal statutes is critical to protecting Minnesota's public health and the environment. This is an unnecessary and, in the hands of the wrong legislature, potentially disastrous restriction and defacto moratorium on the authority you and your agencies need to protect the health of Minnesota's citizens. We urge you to **VETO** this legislation.

HF 2171: Game and fish bill (Ingebrigtsen/Hackbarth)

We strongly support the long-overdue increase in license fees so the DNR can do its job. We oppose the policy rider that orders the DNR to manage the wolf population in a way that does not reflect the best, original judgment of professional game managers at the department.

We acknowledge that the omnibus environmental bill and the game and fish bill are likely to be signed. We are disappointed, however, that, after showing great courage in using your veto authority to turn back several other negative measures from this legislature, that we are asked to compromise and accept the continued chipping away at Minnesota's core environmental policies.

We look forward to working with you further as you develop your Administration's environmental agenda.

Sincerely,



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