

# CLEAN WATER LEGACY

## ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

### OVERVIEW

In 2006, the Minnesota Legislature enacted the Clean Water Legacy Act to create an effective system to identify sources of pollution in Minnesota's waters and restore their quality. This law accelerated completion of clean-up plans (a.k.a. TMDLs) required by the federal Clean Water Act for each waterbody and each problem pollutant in our state. These plans identify the pollution sources and assign pollution reduction targets needed to reach water quality standards. Clean-up "Action Plans" then lay out the steps to achieve clean water.

The single largest source of water pollution in Minnesota currently is nonpoint pollution, primarily runoff from agricultural fields. Action Plans must address agricultural runoff efficiently and effectively if future generations in Minnesota are to enjoy clean and healthy waters. Our legislation creates fair and common sense accountability for public funds used to clean up our water.



Photo: Darrell Spencer

## PROBLEM

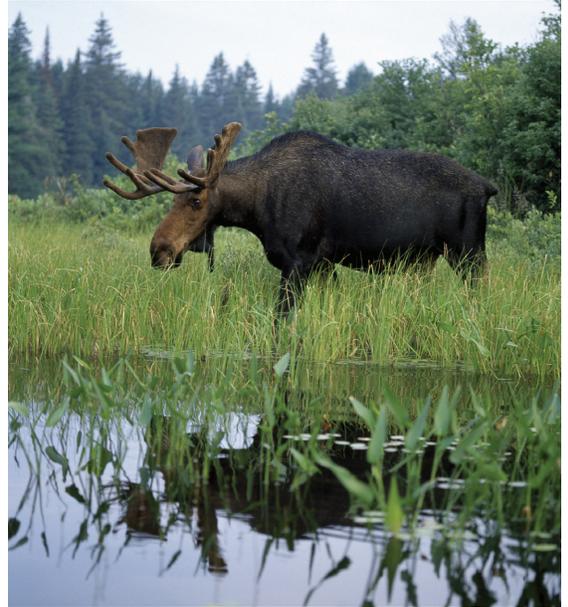
Six out of seven – 86% – of water quality impairments in Minnesota are caused by nonpoint sources, mainly agricultural operations that discharge sediments, fertilizers, pesticides and bacteria into our rivers, lakes, wetlands and streams. Despite substantial investments, Minnesota lacks an effective mechanism to track and address nonpoint pollution. The following weaknesses in the present system have been identified:

- vague clean-up plans – many clean-up plans fail to include a complete analysis of the pollution sources;
- uncertain timelines – clean-up plans lack clear targets, timelines and benchmarks for restoration of our waters; and
- lack of clear nonpoint priorities – the most effective actions to reduce nonpoint pollution are not clearly prioritized.

## POSITION STATEMENT

The Legislature should direct the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to:

- improve clean-up and Action Plans by requiring:
  - > clear identification of nonpoint pollution sources;
  - > specific goals, firm timelines, and criteria for on-the-ground projects;
  - > approval of Action Plans within one year of clean-up plan approval; and
- develop a priority list of most effective actions for allocating clean-up funds.



## COMMITTEES | CONTACTS

### Bill authors:

Representative John Persell,  
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### Key committees:

HOUSE: Environment and Energy Policy; Environment, Economic Development and Agriculture Finance

SENATE: Environment and Natural Resources Policy; Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance

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