



June 3, 2016

Dear Governor Mark Dayton

Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk
Senate Minority Leader David Hann

Speaker of the House Kurt Daudt
House Minority Leader Paul Thissen:

The 2016 Legislature adjourned with some very important business left unfinished. High among these is passage of a precedent setting package of bonding initiatives proposed by Governor Dayton to protect and restore the water across Minnesota.

The undersigned organizations call on the Legislature to reach agreement with the Governor on a bonding package that includes the full \$210 million funding for these priorities for our state and for the Governor to then call the Legislature back into a Special Session to pass them. These are all key bonding priorities for the environment and conservation community. They include three line items under the Public Facilities Authority, the RIM Reserve Conservation Easements/CREP Match under the Board of Water & Soil Resources, and the St. Louis River Area of Concern Clean-Up under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Each of these key investments will pay long-lasting dividends for the people of our state and most will leverage additional Federal funds.

All of these initiatives received some funding in the bonding proposals that were considered by the Legislature. **We urge that these priorities be funded at the levels recommended by the Governor in a Special Session.**

Public Facilities Authority

Water Infrastructure: \$25 million. These funds help local governments repair and modernize their aging wastewater and drinking water systems through essential clean water and drinking water projects. These projects serve the needs of residents and businesses, alike. State funds trigger Federal grants and support affordable, low-interest loans.

Wastewater Infrastructure Fund (WIF): \$80 million. The Water Infrastructure Funding Program increases aid to communities rehabilitating aging wastewater and drinking water infrastructure systems. Grant funding is based on the average household income of residents and is designed to keep clean water affordable for Minnesotans.

Point Source Implementation Grants: \$62 million. The Point Source Implementation Grant Program helps lift the burden off local communities' wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Upgrading wastewater treatment plants is a tried and true method of improving water quality and making progress on water quality restoration and protection goals.

Board of Water and Soil Resources

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Conservation Easements for Federal CREP match: \$30 million. The Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve program helps willing Minnesota farmland owners to conserve soil, eliminate erosion, protect habitat, and improve water quality. It also helps cover the cost of installing and maintaining buffers where required under the buffer law passed in 2015 and amended in 2016. State bonding at \$30 million for RIM will leverage another \$60 million in Federal dollars, and is part of a five year 100,000-acre clean water effort.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

St. Louis River AOC Clean Up: \$12.7 million. This project will clean up contaminated sediment and industrial waste at ten locations at the St. Louis River Estuary and the Duluth harbor and bay. The House and Senate's shared contribution equals 35 percent of the total project cost, and will be matched by 65 percent Federal funding.

We thank you for all of your hard work this session, and ask your support for the above priorities.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse, Executive Director
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Alliance for Sustainability
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
Audubon Society of St. Paul
Austin Coalition for Environmental Sustainability
Clean Water Fund/Action Alliance
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
Environment Minnesota
Fresh Energy
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest
Friends of The Mississippi River
Friends of the Parks & Trails of St. Paul &
Ramsey County
Institute for Local Self Reliance
Izaak Walton League - Minnesota Division
Kids for Saving Earth
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters Minnesota
Lower Phalen Creek Project
Lutheran Advocacy - Minnesota
Mankato Area Environmentalists

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Food Association
Minnesota Forestry Association
Minnesota Land Trust
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union
Minnesota Public Interest Research Group
Minnesota Renewable Energy Society
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
MN350
National Parks Conservation Association
Renewing the Countryside
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Save Lake Superior Association
Sierra Club - North Star Chapter
St. Croix River Association
Transit for Livable Communities
The Trust for Public Land
Voyageurs National Park Association
WaterLegacy

Cc: Sen. LeRoy Stumpf
Sen. David Senjem

Rep. Paul Torkelson
Rep. Alice Hausman

