

MEP Collaborative Priorities 2022

Building forward at the scale and pace our communities need.

Climate Change • Healthy Ecosystems • Racial Justice

Facilitating: Supporting Narrative and Shared Messaging

The MEP coalition will support proactive and defensive message development and campaigns that are both public facing and behind-the-scenes, including:

- Holding state leaders and legislators accountable for real climate and ecosystem progress.
- Applying science and law in agency decision-making to meet their mission.
- Ensuring environmental and racial justice is centered in policy solutions and appropriations.

Co-Leading: Areas of Significant Engagement

Fighting for a healthy climate. We know that our climate affects everything. That is why, in 2019, the MEP Coalition adopted the climate crisis as the most critical issue to tackle for collective progress. In addition to supporting numerous legislative proposals, including the House Climate Action Caucus Framework, that address the climate crisis across several sectors, MEP will devote significant resources to:

- Investing in natural climate solutions: forests, prairies, native perennials, and established and emerging regenerative agriculture practices that provide multiple ecological and societal benefits.
- Building Climate Impacts Analysis into bonding proposals, state appropriations, and permitting.
- Connecting member organizations to promote the need for a legislature that acts for real climate progress.
- Developing a plan to reach an equitable, net-zero economy by 2040.

People and planet-centered public institutions. Our public institutions were created to serve people and our environment – but increasingly, the public good takes a back seat. Too often, public institutions treat industry like their primary clients, overlooking sound science and the good of people and the clean water, air, and lands that sustain life. MEP will facilitate development of an action plan to tackle this foundational issue. This work will include:

- Calling on state officials to require investigation and repair of damage from Line 3 construction that is polluting surface and groundwater, wetlands, wild rice beds and other sensitive ecosystems.
- Updating the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and LCCMR process to be more equitable, community-centered, accessible, and impactful.

Getting the lead out. Since the 1970s, we have known lead exposure to be a threat to public health and wildlife. Yet, the unnecessary presence of lead continues to impact the wellbeing of Minnesotans and ecosystems despite practical solutions. Lead exposure disproportionately impacts Black, brown, and Indigenous Minnesotans, children, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. Getting the lead out is crucial to advancing justice for all people. In addition to supporting legislation to ban lead fishing tackle and lead ammunition, MEP staff will work with partners to:

- Identify and bring awareness to lead levels in drinking water and the environment.
- Advance state legislation + federal funds to replace 100,000+ lead drinking water service lines across MN.

Coordinating: Defense to protect our Environment

We must defend our bedrock laws, rules and funding that protect our people and planet. As a coalition, MEP will work to help coordinate defense strategies and tactics, protecting, for example:

- Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund allocations for 2022.
- Clean Water Land and Legacy appropriations.
- 2022 state supplemental budget appropriations.
- Free speech, especially in the face of Line 3.
- Water quality standards.

Legislative Policy Portfolio for a Just Transition – Session 2021

The MEP coalition will support a dynamic slate of proactive legislation with sign-on letters, action alerts, and other services. This includes:

Investments

Bonding For Climate and Equity. Highlights include

- Transit and active transportation
- Solar, HVAC and efficiency Improvements in schools, public buildings and affordable housing
- Natural lands, prairies and forests

Bonding for Water Infrastructure: At least \$300 million in water infrastructure bonding to replace and improve aging infrastructure and upgrade water treatment facilities. The amount should maximize our ability to take advantage of the anticipated federal match made possible by federal infrastructure legislation.

Replacement of Lead Service Lines: Funding for private lead service line replacement. Lead service lines pose a significant health risk to Minnesotans. Seeking state bonding and general funds to maximize federal funds to meet Minnesota's \$300 million+ need.

Policy

ENRTF / LCCMR Redesign and Ballot Question: The current constitutional dedication of lottery funds will expire in 2024. A working group including many MEP coalition members has developed a proposal to increase the amount, equity, effectiveness, and community responsiveness of the ENRTF funding allocation process while extending the constitutional dedication for 50 years.

Energy

- Moving the state to 100% clean electricity production as fast as possible. (100% Campaign and partners)
- Updating MN's 2007 emissions reduction goals and benchmarks to meet needs outlined by current science. *Next Generation Climate Act* (MN Center for Environmental Advocacy)
- Promoting the House Climate Action Caucus bills to reduce greenhouse gases across our economy.
- Requiring MPCA to evaluate cumulative impacts of pollution from projects undergoing permitting on communities that will be impacted by a project seeking a permit. *MN Frontline Communities Protection Act, also known as Cumulative Impacts Bill* (COPAL, Community Members for Environmental Justice)

Agriculture

- Setting Soil-Healthy Farming Goals of 5.75 million acres of soil-healthy practices by 2030, 12.5 million by 2035, 25 million by 2040. (Land Stewardship Project)
- Soil Health Cost-Share Funding of \$20 million to financially support farmers transitioning to soil-health farming practices. (Land Stewardship Project)
- Funding for Farmer Resiliency Planning. (Land Stewardship Project)
- Funding for Climate Resiliency Research Position from the Higher Ed Budget. (Land Stewardship Project)
- Funding Forever Green. The Forever Green Initiative at the University of MN is developing the next generation of winter-hardy perennial and winter-annual cropping systems that protect our water, improve soil health, and enhance farm prosperity. (Friends of the Mississippi River)
- Funding Continuous Living Cover Value-Chain Development. A state funded grant program for supply-chain businesses within the emerging Continuous Living Cover farming sector that will grow the markets and products for these crops. (Friends of the Mississippi River)
- Clean Fuel Standard Legislation: This policy is currently in development and has the potential to be harmful if it expands or invests in the corn-based ethanol that harms our waters and adds significant greenhouse gas emissions. The policy has the potential to be helpful in advancing adoption of electric vehicles and/or deployment of the next generation of winter annual oilseeds like camelina or pennycress.
- Supporting small and medium-sized meat processors (50 or fewer FTEs) with safety and business training, technical assistance, MDA resource staff to help navigate inspection processes, subsidized meat-processor education and apprenticeship programs. (Land Stewardship Project)

Pollinators

- Requiring all cities to allow native plant landscaping. (Wild Ones)
- Highways for Habitat. Adopting a roadside habitat management program that mandates ecologically sound practices and provides funding for the program and an ecologist manager.” (Pollinator Friendly Alliance)

Waste

- Requiring the accuracy of labels on compostable products to protect the quality of compost (Minnesota Composting Council, Eureka Recycling)

Water, Lands and Wildlife

- Requiring that industry show a successful example of a copper nickel sulfide mine that has operated for 10 years and been closed for 10 years without polluting before building such a mine in Minnesota. *Prove it First* (Friends of Boundary Water Wilderness)
- Enacting a ban on sulfide-ore copper mining on state lands and prohibiting the issuance of state permits, licenses or leases anywhere within the Rainy River Headwaters. *Boundary Waters Permanent Protection Bill* (Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness)
- Shift duty to promote mining from DNR to Department of Employment and Economic Development to prevent conflict between promotion and regulation (Friends of the Boundary Water Wilderness)
- Repealing an exemption for endangered plants, otherwise protected by MN endangered species law, within Minnesota's 135,000 miles of public rights of way (Friends of MN Scientific and Natural Areas)
- Statewide ban on lead fishing tackle and ammunition (Friends of MN Scientific and Natural Areas)
- Increasing baseline funding for Soil & Water Conservation Districts out of the Environment Finance Budget. (Land Stewardship Project)
- Funding the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (Land Stewardship Project)

Is your MEP member organization championing legislation that isn't on this list? This is a dynamic document. Contact Sara Wolff at sara@mepartnership.org

