



Minnesota House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Chair Jamie Becker-Finn

March 8, 2024

Re: Supporting HF 3389

Chair Becker-Finn and Members,

The Minnesota Environmental Partnership and undersigned organizations support HF 3389 (Pursell), which requires notification of the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) when drain tile is installed or modified, and an annual report to the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Minnesota farms have been installing drain tile at a rate of up to 100 million feet per year, according to University of Minnesota Extension. Currently, there is no requirement that installations be reported, nor is there a system for reporting and tracking these installations, which can have significant cumulative downstream impacts on public water resources.

New and enlarged tiling increases the amount, velocity, and erosive potential of water that enters public drainage systems and downstream public waters. Notification of local SWCDs provides valuable information that can be used to anticipate impacts to public drainage systems, wetlands, and downstream public waters.

This bill is a good first step that begins the process of understanding the impact of tiling on water resources in Minnesota. HF 3389 clearly delineates between “repair and regular maintenance” of existing systems, which are not required to be reported, and modifications that “enlarge, extend, deepen, reline, improve, replace, or otherwise intentionally alter” existing systems. HF 3389 is solely a reporting and notification bill; it does not impose any regulation on the installation of drain tile.

Thank you to Rep. Pursell for offering HF 3389 and to Chair Becker-Finn for hearing this bill. We believe that the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee should advance the bill and continue this important conversation about ensuring that we track changes on the landscape that can impact public water resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Morse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Morse
Executive Director

Submitted on behalf of the following organizations:

A.C.E.S.

Alliance for Sustainability

CURE

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

League of Women Voters Minnesota

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Pollinator Friendly Alliance

Resilient Cities and Communities

Save Lake Superior Association

Save Our Sky Blue Waters

Sierra Club North Star Chapter

St. Paul Audubon Society

Sustainable Farming Association

Vote Climate

Wild Rivers Conservancy