

Subject Environment and Natural Resources

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Overview

This bill contains appropriations and other provisions impacting the Pollution Control Agency (PCA), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and other entities.

Article 1: Environment and Natural Resources Appropriations

This article contains the fiscal year 2026 and 2027 appropriations for the PCA, DNR, BWSR, metropolitan area regional parks, Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa, the Minnesota Zoo, and the Science Museum, as well as modifications and reductions to certain appropriations from the 2024-25 biennium for some of these entities.

Section	Description - Article 1: Environment and Natural Resource Appropriations
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| 1 | Environment and natural resources appropriations.
Technical. |
| 2 | Pollution Control Agency.
Appropriates \$149,605,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$155,675,000 in fiscal year 2027 to the PCA, including appropriations for the Environmental Quality Board (EQB). |
| 3 | Natural Resources.
Appropriates \$398,612,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$398,358,000 in fiscal year 2027 to the DNR, including pass through appropriations for the Office of School Trust Lands. |
| 4 | Board of Water and Soil Resources.
Appropriates \$16,145,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$16,102,000 in fiscal year 2027 to BWSR. |
| 5 | Metropolitan Council.
Appropriates \$13,390,000 each year in fiscal year 2026 and \$11,740,000 in fiscal year 2027 to the Metropolitan Council. |

Section Description - Article 1: Environment and Natural Resource Appropriations

- 6 **Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa.**
Appropriates \$1,070,000 each year in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa.
- 7 **Zoological Board.**
Appropriates \$14,180,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$14,532,000 in fiscal year 2027 to the Minnesota Zoo.
- 8 **Science Museum.**
Appropriates \$1,460,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$1,260,000 in fiscal year 2027 to the Science Museum of Minnesota.
- 9 **Legislative Coordinating Commission.**
Appropriates \$198,000 in fiscal year 2026 to the Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC) for the Sustainable Foraging Task Force created in this bill.
- 10 **Employment and Economic Development.**
Appropriates \$444,000 each year to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for the Minnesota Business First Stop Program.
- 11 **Appropriations; drought relief.**
Reduces a prior appropriation to the DNR to replace drought-killed tree seedlings and repurposes the money for reforestation needs associated with wildfires.
- 12 **Total Appropriation.**
Reduces the total appropriation for the PCA in fiscal year 2025 to account for the reduction in the next section.
- 13 **Environmental Analysis and Outcomes.**
Reduces a fiscal year 2025 appropriation to the PCA for a local government climate resiliency and water infrastructure grant program by \$3,000,000. Extends previous appropriations for two water-quality projects, and increases and extends a transfer to the Department of Health for biomonitoring in firefighters.
- 14 **Resource Management and Assistance.**
Corrects appropriations from the previous biennium (fiscal years 2025-25) for two loan programs to allow money that is repaid to be deposited into the relevant revolving loan program accounts (small business environmental-improvement loan program and environmental assistance grant and loan program).

Section Description - Article 1: Environment and Natural Resource Appropriations

- 15 **Transfers.**
Eliminates an ongoing transfer of \$100,000 from the general fund to the metropolitan landfill contingency action trust account.
- 16 **Total Appropriation.**
Reduces the total appropriation for the DNR in fiscal year 2024 to account for the reduction in the next section.
- 17 **Fish and Wildlife Management.**
Reduces a fiscal year 2024 appropriation to the DNR for enhancing prairies and grasslands and restoring wetlands on state-owned wildlife management areas (WMAs) by \$5,500,000. Modifies and extends a prior appropriation for shooting sports facility grants.
- 18 **Board of Water and Soil Resources.**
Reduces fiscal year 2025 appropriations to BWSR for soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and for conservation easements and restoration and enhancement for purposes of climate resiliency, adaptation, and carbon sequestration for a total of \$3,430,000.

Article 2: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriations

This article includes the fiscal year 2026 ENRTF appropriation recommendations of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).

The LCCMR is made up of 17 members with ten legislators and seven citizens (five legislative members from each body, five citizen members appointed by the Governor, one citizen member appointed by the House of Representatives, and one citizen member appointed by the Senate). The LCCMR is tasked with making recommendations for how 5.5 percent of the market value of the ENRTF is spent each year.

Section Description - Article 2: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriations

- 1 **Appropriations.**
Technical.

Description - Article 2: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
Section Appropriations

2 **Minnesota resources.**

Subd. 1. Total appropriation. Provides a total appropriation of \$103,326,000 in fiscal year 2026 from the ENRTF.

Subd. 2. Definition. Technical.

Subd. 3. Foundational natural resource data and information. Provides a total appropriation for natural resource data and information projects of \$22,084,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Subd. 4. Water resources. Provides a total appropriation for water resources projects of \$11,812,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Subd. 5. Environmental education. Provides a total appropriation for environmental education projects of \$11,965,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Subd. 6. Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. Provides a total appropriation for invasive species projects of \$6,713,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Subd. 7. Air quality, climate change, and renewable energy. Provides a total appropriation for air quality and climate change projects of \$11,744,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Subd. 8. Methods to protect or restore land, water, and habitat. Provides a total appropriation for protection, restoration, and enhancement projects of \$12,188,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Subd. 9. Land acquisition, habitat, and recreation. Provides a total appropriation for land acquisition, habitat, and recreation projects of \$19,553,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Subd. 10. Administration, emerging issues, and contract agreement reimbursement. Provides a total appropriation of \$7,267,000 in fiscal year 2026 for certain administrative expenses and an emerging issues account.

Subds. 11 to 17. Provides project requirements that apply to all recipients of an appropriation in this article. The LCCMR recommends similar requirements each year, which include: specifying the availability of appropriations; data requirements; specific project requirements, including requiring ecological restoration and management plans; and requiring easements to be permanent and have a long-term monitoring and enforcement plan. Extends several previous appropriations set to expire.

Description - Article 2: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund	
Section	Appropriations
3	Foundational natural resource data and information. Modifies a previous appropriation for a grant to Monarch Joint Venture to allow net income generated as part of the project to be reinvested in the project if approved in the work plan.
4	Methods to protect or restore land, water, and habitat. Modifies a previous appropriation for a grant to Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District to eliminate a requirement that prioritized areas only be within Hubbard County.

Article 3: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grants Appropriations

This article modifies the new community grant program that became law upon passage of the constitutional amendment passed in November of 2024 that renewed the dedication of net lottery proceeds to the ENRTF through 2050 and increased the amount of money that may be appropriated from the fund each year from 5.5 percent of the market value of the fund to seven percent. The additional 1.5 percent increase is available for appropriation to the DNR for purposes of the community grant program beginning in fiscal year 2026.

Description - Article 3: Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund Community	
Section	Grants Appropriations
1	Grants. Requires community grants to be expended for benefits across all regions and residents of the state and adds trail maintenance and improvement and aquatic invasive species (AIS) management to the list of activities eligible for grants. Removes language being recodified in the next section.
2	Prohibitions. Prohibits the DNR from awarding grants to a state agency, the University of Minnesota, or for scientific research.
3	Environment and natural resources trust fund community grant program; report. Requires the DNR to submit a report to the legislature by December 15, 2025, on the plans for implementing the community grant program.

Section	Description - Article 3: Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grants Appropriations
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| 4 | Environment and natural resources trust fund appropriation.
Appropriates \$28,180,000 in fiscal year 2026 for the community grant program. |
| 5 | Effective date.
States that sections 1 to 4 are effective the day following final enactment. |

Article 4: Environment and Natural Resources Policy

This article contains a number of policy provisions impacting the environment and natural resources.

Section	Description - Article 4: Environment and Natural Resources Policy
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| 1 | Outreach to culturally diverse communities.
Requires the DNR to ensure that its work is carried out in a manner that facilitates enhanced outreach to all Minnesotans and that its interactions with the public include audiovisual communication components and do not rely exclusively on written forms of communication. |
| 2 | Definition.
Technical related to the next section. |
| 3 | Priority.
Modifies a provision in the DNR community tree-planting grants statute to remove reference to a federal tool that has been discontinued and provide for the continued use of the technical documentation for the tool as it existed July 31, 2024. Clarifies that the DNR may follow chapter 16B requirements and consider the ability of grant recipients to complete the work when prioritizing grants. |
| 4 | Abandoned watercraft.
Allows peace officers to tag abandoned watercraft and requires the DNR to notify the registered owner that the watercraft has been tagged. Requires the DNR to seize and forfeit the watercraft if the condition that led to its tagging has not been remedied within 14 days. Makes the owner criminally and civilly liable for abandoning the watercraft. |

Section Description - Article 4: Environment and Natural Resources Policy

- 5 Watercraft surcharge.**
Increases the AIS surcharge for watercraft effective January 1, 2026. Replaces the current surcharge (\$10.60) with a surcharge that varies based on the size, type, and use of the watercraft.
- 6 Minnesota releaf program.**
Modifies a provision in the Minnesota releaf program statute to remove reference to a federal tool that has been discontinued and provide for the continued use of the technical documentation for the tool as it existed July 31, 2024.
- 7 Property subject to seizure and forfeiture.**
Modifies the statute that governs seizure of property by conservation officers to include seizures of abandoned watercraft.
- 8 Restrictions after conviction; abandoned watercraft.**
Subjects a person who is convicted of abandoning a watercraft to certain penalties until the person has reimbursed the DNR for all of the department's costs associated with the abandoned watercraft enforcement action. The penalties include loss of game and fish and recreational vehicle licenses and registrations.
- 9 Resident disabled veterans; reduced fee licenses.**
Allows resident veterans with a 50-99% service-connected disability to obtain certain game and fish licenses at a reduced cost, effective March 1, 2027.
- 10 Resident hunting.**
Provides that for a resident veteran with a 50-99% service-connected disability, the fee for a license to take deer or small game is \$5, effective March 1, 2027.
- 11 Resident fishing.**
Provides that for a resident veteran with a 50-99% service-connected disability, the fee for an angling license is \$5, effective March 1, 2027.
- 12 County authority to limit firearms for deer hunting.**
Allows a county located in the former shotgun zone (which is being repealed in this act) to limit the type of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county.
- 13 Crossbow hunting and fishing.**
Extends by one year the ability of a person to hunt and fish with a crossbow during the respective archery seasons.

Section Description - Article 4: Environment and Natural Resources Policy

- 14 **Open seasons for angling.**
Establishes a continuous open season for largemouth and smallmouth bass fishing.
- 15 **Water-use permit; processing fee.**
Increases water-use permit fees, effective January 1, 2026.
- 16 **Permit application and notification fees.**
Increases the water-use permit application fee, effective January 1, 2026.
- 17 **Establishment.**
Extends a provision appropriating money from the closed landfill investment fund (CLIF) to the PCA by four years (from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2029) and increases the amount from \$4,500,000 to \$6,500,000.
- 18 **Outreach to culturally diverse communities.**
Requires the PCA to ensure that its work is carried out in a manner that facilitates enhanced outreach to all Minnesotans and that its interactions with the public include audiovisual communication components and do not rely exclusively on written forms of communication.
- 19 **Definitions.**
Adds a definition of “internal components” for purposes of Amara’s Law which prohibits the sale of products containing intentionally added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Excludes certain recreational vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles, electric-assisted bicycles, and replacement parts for these items from the definition of “juvenile products” which exempts them from a ban on juvenile products that contain PFAS that began January 1, 2025.
- 20 **Prohibitions.**
Exempts internal components from the prohibition on certain products that contain intentionally added PFAS that went into effect January 1, 2025.
- 21 **Prohibition.**
Temporarily exempts firefighting foam containing PFAS used in fixed firefighting systems at airport hangars from the ban on PFAS containing firefighting foam until January 1, 2028. Allows additional extensions under certain circumstances.
- 22 **Definition.**
Technical related to the next section.

Section Description - Article 4: Environment and Natural Resources Policy

- 23 **Priority.**
Modifies a provision in the Metropolitan Council community tree-planting grants statute to remove reference to a federal tool that has been discontinued and provide for the continued use of the technical documentation for the tool as it existed July 31, 2024.
- 24 **Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force.**
Establishes the Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force to provide recommendations to the legislature on science-based foraging guidelines for state lands by February 28, 2026.
- 25 **Outdoor recreation endorsement recommendations.**
Requires the DNR, in consultation with the commissioner of public safety and deputy registrars, to submit recommendations and a statutory framework for establishing an outdoor recreation license plate endorsement to the legislature by January 15, 2026.
- 26 **Notification of firearms restrictions during deer hunting option.**
Requires the DNR to notify counties located in the shotgun zone being repealed in this article of the option to adopt an ordinance limiting which firearms may be used for deer hunting by March 1, 2026.
- 27 **Moratorium on foraging rules.**
Prohibits the DNR from adopting foraging rules until July 1, 2026.
- 28 **Repealer.**
Repeals § 97B.318 (shotgun zone) effective January 1, 206, and repeals § 103E.067 (drainage related reporting requirements).

Article 5: State Lands

This article contains a provision expanding the statutory boundaries of Carley State Park as well as provisions authorizing a number of counties to sell certain state and tax-forfeited land.

Section Description – Article 5: State Lands

- 1 **Addition to state park.**
Adds land to the statutory boundaries of Carley State Park.

Section Description – Article 5: State Lands

- 2 Private sale of tax-forfeited land; Aitken County.**
Allows Aitkin County to sell certain tax-forfeited lands by private sale.
- 3 Private sale of tax-forfeited land; Aitken County.**
Allows Aitkin County to sell certain tax-forfeited lands by private sale.
- 4 Private sale of surplus state land bordering public water; Cass County.**
Allows the DNR to sell surplus state land bordering public water in Cass County by private sale.
- 5 Private sale of tax-forfeited land; Itasca County.**
Allows Itasca County to sell certain tax-forfeited lands by private sale.
- 6 Private sale of tax-forfeited land bordering public water; Sibley County.**
Allows Sibley County to sell certain tax-forfeited lands bordering public water by private sale.
- 7 Private sale of tax-forfeited land; St. Louis County.**
Allows St. Louis County to sell certain tax-forfeited lands by private sale.

Article 6: Environmental Permitting Reform

This article makes several changes related to environmental permitting.

Section Description - Article 6: Environmental Permitting Reform

- 1 Permitting efficiency.**
Modifies the PCA's permitting efficiency reporting requirements, including requiring the report to focus on Tier 2 permits and include additional information about permits that have not met statutory goals. Requires the PCA to give permit applicants five business days to remedy deficiencies in permit applications.
- 2 Permit fees.**
Allows the PCA to decline to provide expedited permitting when it lacks the staff or contractor capacity to provide it. Allows an expedited permitting agreement to provide that if permitting is completed ahead of schedule, the PCA may retain fees that would have been due and appropriates those proceeds to the PCA to administer its permitting duties.

Section Description - Article 6: Environmental Permitting Reform

3 When prepared.

Modifies the signature threshold needed on a petition to require an environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) from 100 individuals who live or own property in the state to 100 individuals who live or own property in the county or one or more adjoining counties.

4 Project prerequisites.

States that prohibitions on governments making final decisions on permits and project approvals or starting a project until environmental review is complete do not preclude a local unit of government from beginning to review a feedlot permit application.

5 Scoping environmental assessment worksheet not required for projects that require a mandatory environmental impact statement.

Requires the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to amend its rules to remove the requirement to produce a scoping EAW when state law requires an environmental impact statement (EIS).

6 Intent.

States that the intent of the legislature in enacting this article is to balance the state's economic interests with protection of the state's environment and natural resources.

7 Report on use of authority to extend timeline for certain agency actions.

Requires BWSR to report on the number of extensions of certain local government wetland-related decisions made during a two-year period.



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