



## CONSERVATION MINNESOTA

January 17, 2023

Chair Hansen and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

**We write today to ask for your support for HF 172 (Hansen), providing appropriations from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.**

At Conservation Minnesota, we're dedicated to protecting the people and the places that Minnesotans love. For three decades, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund has helped to further this mission, providing over \$900 million in innovative funding for natural resource management projects. We're proud to support the 2023 ENRTF Appropriations Bill, which continues this special tradition of stewardship that the ENRTF offers to Minnesotans.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund is among the most important environmental achievements in Minnesota history. When the ENRTF was founded in 1988, the Minnesota Legislature created a substantial and sustainable source of funding for the intergenerational protection of our environment, dedicating a portion of net lottery proceeds to help provide for activities that protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources. Over time, the growth of this fund has allowed the Legislature to appropriate over \$79 million this year toward lasting, worthwhile conservation purposes.

Since 2006, the LCCMR has provided an avenue for the public to play a key role in the appropriation of ENRTF dollars, enabling legislators and citizen appointees to assess projects and collaborate on shared recommendations. We believe that this process is a hallmark of good governance, even if it's not always easy. We commend the members of the LCCMR for their efforts over the past year to find common ground and to approve formal recommendations with a strong supermajority.

The resulting ENRTF Appropriations Bill, HF 172 (Hansen), is a testament to the potential of the Fund. This bill will enable our state to better understand, protect, and enjoy our environment; promoting projects that safeguard endangered species, restore water resources, encourage innovative climate technologies, renew local forests, expand environmental education and recreation, and so much more. We're excited to see these projects move forward, and we urge you to support HF 172 so that Minnesotans can realize the benefits of this vital environmental funding.

*Additionally, Conservation Minnesota would like to remind members that the constitutional dedication of lottery proceeds to the ENRTF expires in 2025. We look forward to working with you this session to help reauthorize this important dedication for future generations.*

Sincerely,

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