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May 11, 2020

House Ways and Means Chair Rep. Lyndon Carlson and
House Capital Investment Committee Chair Rep. Mary Murphy
Minnesota House of Representatives

RE: [HF 2529 - A20-0785 Amendment](#), Omnibus capital investment bill.

Dear Chairs Carlson and Murphy,

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, I want to extend our thanks for your inclusion in the Omnibus capital investment bill of funding for the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program. This important program through the Board of Water and Soil Resources is administered locally by Soil and Water Conservation Districts, working with interested landowners to enroll marginal agricultural land into permanent conservation easements.

The RIM appropriation in the bill of \$12.5 million will become part of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and will secure a federal match of twice that amount, \$25 million, in landowner payments through the federal portion of CREP – the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program. This \$12.5 million state investment will help us make strides in achieving our water quality goals, through wetland restorations, riparian buffers, and wellhead protection easements.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not encourage you to consider fully funding the Governor's request of \$16.5 million for the RIM/CREP program, as this would complete the state's matching portions of the program and bring in \$33 million in landowner USDA CRP payments for a total of \$49.5 million for the Minnesota CREP program.

Based on a USDA economic assessment, a \$16.5 million state investment that brings in \$33 million federal funding would further have the following economic impacts.

- \$63.36 million in total economic output
- \$44.06 million in value added income
- 461 jobs created or maintained

Thank you for all you are doing during these trying times. A strong investment in RIM in this year's bonding bill makes sense both environmentally and economically.

Sincerely,

Roland Cleveland
MASWCD President