



TO: House Capital Investment Committee

FROM: Scott Christensen, State Chair
Ducks Unlimited

DATE: April 3, 2022

RE: Support H.F. 3813, Board of Water and Soil Resources Water Quality and Storage program and Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program funding

Chair Lee and members of the committee,

On behalf of nearly 50,000 Ducks Unlimited (DU) members across Minnesota, I wish to express support for H.F. 3813, which would make an appropriation of \$10 million to the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) to enhance, restore, and protect environmentally sensitive conservation lands such as wetlands through the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program. Ducks Unlimited is the world leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation, having conserved over 237,000 acres here in Minnesota. To accomplish this, we have been working alongside valued conservation partners like BWSR for decades doing our best to restore Minnesota's critical wetland resources.

Wetlands are nature's kidneys and are one of the most cost-effective methods for filtering our life-giving freshwater. Analysis shows that in 2019, the wetland restoration work done by DU alone throughout the Prairie Pothole Region, which includes western Minnesota, prevented over 176,000 tons of soil erosion thereby preventing the release of over 57 tons of phosphorous and 1,328 tons of nitrogen into our waterways. Programs like RIM further amplify the important work being done across the Minnesota landscape by DU and others in the conservation community. Working together with agriculture, benefits of the RIM program go beyond just water quality improvement and also result in enhanced wildlife habitat that supports one of the most robust outdoor economies in the United States. Minnesota's hunters, anglers, trappers, and birdwatchers infuse billions of dollars into local economies throughout the state and therefore the continued restoration of our cherished natural resources is in the economic best interest of our citizens at-large.

Furthermore, accelerated wetland restoration is an important method to sequester carbon and reduce overall emissions produced by our state. It is estimated that the Prairie Pothole landscape can sequester over 1.3 metric tons of carbon per acre per year if properly managed. Unfortunately, this eco-region of our state has sustained tremendous wetland loss due to land-use changes, surpassing 90% loss in some counties. The work of BWSR through the RIM program help restore this important landscape and make Minnesota more climate resilient.

Thank you for all your support for conservation here in Minnesota and for your consideration of this important program. We ask that you please approve H.F. 3813 as soon as possible and move this legislation one-step closer to the finish line.

Sincerely,

Scott Christensen
State Chair, Minnesota
Ducks Unlimited