

FRESHWATER

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Freshwater Society is a nonprofit organization working to inspire and empower people to value and preserve our freshwater resources.

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June 15, 2020

Representative Rick Hansen
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55115

Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen
Chair, Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee
3207 Senate Office Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55115

Dear Representative Hansen and Senator Ingebrigtsen:

For over 50 years, Freshwater has been a leading public nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving clean and abundant freshwater, the surrounding watersheds, and groundwater. We know this is a very difficult session with many urgent issues drawing us all in new directions. However, based on our organizational goals, our priorities remain having a water environment that supports us all, upstream and down. To that end, we want to strongly urge the inclusion of the following provisions in an Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources Policy Bill:

- **SF 4499, Section 51 and Section 53 Minnesota River Basin Water Quality and Storage Program**: this would allow the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to establish a water storage program targeted to help local units of government in the Minnesota Basin to control water volume and flow rates to protect infrastructure and improve water quality. This received a hearing in the House Water Division, and was scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance Committee on March 16th. This legislation is the result of many years of work and has significant support amongst various stakeholders, agencies, and landowners. Additionally, this legislation gives BWSR the time to develop the framework for a water storage program and attract federal dollars to be used.
- **SF 4499, Section 68 Salt Applicator Certification Program**: a comprehensive salt applicator training program will increase awareness and standardize how Minnesota snow and ice managers are trained on chloride best management practices for snow and ice removal. With the amount of deicing that is required in Minnesota winters and the growing number of Minnesota waters showing high levels of salt pollution, we believe this is a crucial step for protection water quality.



- **HF 4554, Section 52 water use permit public hearing required**: the commissioner of the DNR would be required to hold a public hearing prior to issuing a consumptive-use water permit for more than 250,000 gallons a day. This will increase public information and transparency in the DNR water appropriation permitting process and better align the DNR with the public notification practices for other state agencies' water permitting programs.

Additionally, Freshwater would also like to voice our support for inclusion of these provisions in a final omnibus bill:

- **HF 4554, Article 1, Section 1, Subdivision 2**: PFAS water quality standards.
- **HF 4554, Article 2, Section 55**: Advisory Council on Water Supply Systems and Wastewater Treatment Facilities.
- **HF 4554, Article 2, Section 66**: PFAS in food packaging prohibited.
- **HF 4554, Article 2, Section 64**: Nonwoven personal care disposable products labeling requirements.

Lastly, we want to add our voice to others and strongly urge you to pass a LCCMR funding bill this year. There are important projects and provisions within the LCCMR that Freshwater supports, and the role that these projects play in furthering Minnesota's clean water goals is too vital to not fund.

As you move forward in this unconventional and uncertain time, Freshwater is committed to providing the Legislature background, expertise, and support to these pieces of legislation. We stand at the ready to advocate and assist as needed. Again, thank you for your work and leadership during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Linc Stine". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Linc Stine
Executive Director