



March 16, 2022

Representative Rick Hansen  
Chair, Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
407 State Office Building  
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hansen:

The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) opposes HF4274 offered by Representative Todd Lippert regarding the creation of a drainage registry. There are already several requirements in Minnesota Statutes 103E for Watershed Districts (WD's) to provide information about drainage projects to constituents, partners, stakeholders, and the public. Our members are accustomed to frequently reporting to several local, state, and federal agencies such as E-link for Clean Water Funds and Board of Water and Soil funds that are received. We are not opposed to accountability and transparency but WD's in the Red River Basin already have limited staff and financial resources to meet current workloads to manage public drainage systems. Being required to submit drainage documents to an electronic tracking system will create additional workload for our membership and WD's across the State of Minnesota.

We have concerns about the costs involved for the State of Minnesota to develop and implement a drainage registry and the costs for drainage authorities to meet the requirements of a registry. We respectfully request that this issue be referred to the Minnesota Drainage Work Group (DWG) for review and to determine the feasibility of a registry with input from public drainage authorities. The DWG is comprised of diverse stakeholders including drainage authorities, state agencies, and environmental groups that can study this matter. Ultimately any DWG recommendations could be submitted during the 2023 Minnesota Legislative session.

Should you have questions or need additional information, we would be happy to work with our membership to provide more information to you and the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Sip".

Robert L. Sip  
Executive Director

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*Investing in and Managing the Watershed of the Red River Basin*