



March 16, 2022

Representative Rick Hansen
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

RE: HF4274 (Lippert): Drainage registry information portal established

Rep. Hansen and Committee Members

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is membership-based organization representing all 87 Minnesota counties, and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) represents 45 watershed districts in the state, and our associations both support water planning and protection as well as land management to protect water resources. Our members, counties, and watershed districts, serve as drainage authorities charged with management of these systems statewide. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on HF4274 (Lippert): Drainage registry information portal established.

HF4274 proposes establishing a new information portal for all drainage activity in the state. This is a new concept, and we are discussing with our memberships how this would interplay with the drainage work and what the cost of this new reporting and portal establishment.

Additionally, there are other considerations that we would need to contemplate regarding management of public-interest petitions as part of drainage proceedings. Drainage work is already subject to notice and hearing requirements at through which drainage authorities interact with public and private entities and individuals with interest in the project. This proposal could make fundamental changes to that process, which makes it even more important that a drainage stake holder conversation take place before this proposal is advanced.

We recommend this bill be vetted by the Drainage Working Group (DWG) to foster mutual understanding of how the proposed registry will operate and be used. The DWG's purpose revolves around two overarching points: 1) to foster science-based mutual understanding about drainage topics and issues and 2) to develop consensus recommendations for drainage system management and related water management, including recommendations for updating Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103E Drainage and related provisions.

As you can see, review of this proposal is well aligned with the purpose of the DWG. The stakeholders involved in the DWG have in general been united behind our support of having drainage issues receive this vetting and some level of consensus reached before legislative action is supported.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer feedback on HF4274. We would be happy to engage in discussions with the author to better understand his goals and bring those to the DWG.

Sincerely,

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