

Monday, February 23, 2026
Room G23, MN Capitol Building

RE: HF 1667

My name is Dominic Jones, I am the Manager of the Red Rock Rural Water System (RRRWS). Our system is the 2nd largest Rural water system in MN and Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water (LPRW) is the largest. These 2 water systems provide good quality drinking water to 15 counties in Southwest Minnesota.

I am speaking on behalf of all 5 rural water systems and the sewer systems established under MN Statute 116A. We are requesting to be specifically included in MN Statute 446.

Our rural water entities are all government, not for profit organizations which were created for the sole purpose of providing drinking water to many thousands of individuals and cities who reside within our systems. If the water systems did not exist, those MN residents would have to rely on water from private wells which most often would not meet the standards of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

Lincoln Pipestone currently serves over 5,000 building sites and 37 cities. Red Rock Rural Water System serves 2,600 building sites and 15 cities. Many of these cities we now serve, could not afford to replace their own water treatment plants.

1. The whole purpose of the tort liability statute is to prevent civil lawsuits from bankrupting government organizations. If Red Rock, LPRW and the other 3 rural water systems or sewer systems were on the losing end of lawsuit which bankrupted them, it would mean thousands of people may not be able to receive safe drinking water or sewer services.
2. Minnesota Statute 466 was first enacted in 1963 which was before any of the rural systems were formed. LPRW was formed in 1978 and Red Rock was formed in 1984. Furthermore, Minn. Stat. 116A was enacted in 1971, I would argue that if the water systems existed in 1963 they would have been included as part of this statute. When the statute was initially enacted in 1963 it covered cities, counties, townships, school

districts, public corporations and political subdivisions. Since that time the following government organizations were specifically added to this statute:

1. County Agricultural Societies;
2. Joint Powers Boards;
3. Public Libraries;
4. Regional Public Library Systems;
5. Multi-county Library Systems;
6. Family Service Collaboratives;
7. Children's Mental Health Collaboratives;
8. Family Services Collaboratives; and
9. Community Action Agencies.

Again, I would argue that if LPRW, Red Rock and the other rural water systems and sewer systems established under MN Statute 116A existed when the statute was first enacted, water and sewer systems would have been specifically included in the statute and therefore it only makes sense to add it now.

3. Statute 466 states a "political subdivision" is entitled to a cap on liability, and water districts probably fall under the definition of a "political subdivision" however, to avoid the very costly expense of hiring an attorney to spend two or more years in court trying to prove that Red Rock is a political subdivision and therefore entitled to have its tort liability capped. I believe we have a strong argument that we are a political subdivision however, one never knows how a judge may rule and we don't want to waste valuable resources paying attorneys to argue this point. Having water districts and sewer districts specifically added to the Statute would avoid the time, and expense of having a judge clarify what we think is already the case.

At the end of the day water districts are government organizations which were established for the sole purpose of providing people with safe drinking water. The water districts were created to promote public safety and health and we do not want that taken away by a potential law suit which could bankrupt the system and prevent thousands of people from receiving safe drinking water.