



Minnesota
Environmental
Partnership

318 Landmark Center
75 West Fifth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102
www.MEPartnership.org
(651) 290-0154

March 13, 2025

Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Chair Josh Heintzeman

Dear Chair Heintzeman and members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and our coalition of environmental and conservation groups, I would like to share our perspective on HF 253, a bill that would delay revision to Minnesota's Public Waters Inventory (PWI). We are concerned that this bill would needlessly pause this important work and extend existing confusion about the status of Minnesota's waterways.

Minnesota law has long defined which waters are under the state's jurisdiction. The Public Waters Inventory was created not to modify this definition, but to provide clarity to stakeholders about the status of streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands that may concern them. However, this list was last created in the 1980s and is in need of updates. In a 2022 case, the Minnesota Supreme Court asked the Legislature to update the inventory and clarify which waters are protected by statute.

The DNR was provided \$8 million in 2024 to begin the work of updating the PWI using state-of-the-art technology. The Department has hired five new positions and begun this important work, including coordination with local governments. It has expressed willingness to meet with Legislators to discuss the process and plans to release its work schedule soon.

HF 253, however, would delay the PWI update until July 1, 2027. We do not see any reason to delay this update. The DNR has already committed to working with local governments and other stakeholders.

Minnesotans in a wide array of fields including agriculture, conservation, and hydrology have a keen interest in seeing ambiguity regarding state waters resolved as quickly as possible. This delay created by HF 253 would waste time and resources better spent toward the speedy completion of this project.

For these reasons, we ask that you oppose HF 253.

Sincerely,

Steve Morse
Executive Director