

CITY OF COTTONWOOD

78 WEST MAIN STREET | PO BOX 106 | COTTONWOOD, MINNESOTA 56224
TEATHER BLISS, CLERK-ADMINISTRATOR | TEATHER@CITYOFCOTTONWOODMN.GOV
AMY LOUWAGIE, DEPUTY CLERK | ADMIN@CITYOFCOTTONWOODMN.GOV
KATIE EWING, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT | KATIE@CITYOFCOTTONWOODMN.GOV



Thursday, March 6, 2025

Representative Mary Franson
Chair, Minnesota House Capital Investment Committee
Centennial Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

RE: Support for House File 651 – Cottonwood Public Infrastructure

Dear Chair Franson and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee:

On behalf of the City of Cottonwood, I am writing to express our strong support for House File 651, authored by Representative Chris Swedzinski, which seeks \$8,000,000 in capital funding for critical infrastructure upgrades to the community drinking water system and sanitary sewer system.

In 2019 the City of Cottonwood was issued a notice from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for new water quality-based effluent limits pertaining to the discharge of phosphorus. In 2024 the City of Cottonwood was issued a Notice of Violation regarding high limit discharging of the Total Suspended Solids. These issues are in large part due to severe Inflow and Infiltration that the City of Cottonwood's Sanitary Sewer System is experiencing. Since 2019 the City of Cottonwood has replaced its main lift station, hired a new engineering firm, smoke tested sanitary sewer lines, implemented an inflow & infiltration ordinance for points of sale, performed a utility rate study for a tiered increase for project planning, and continuously works with our City engineer to fine tune the infrastructure project plans.

In late 2023, the City's engineering firm discovered and confirmed that the City of Cottonwood's drinking water contained abnormally high levels of manganese. After working with the Minnesota Department of Health, a Health Risk Advisory notice was issued to the City of Cottonwood in early 2024. This has led to the City of Cottonwood committing to a \$3,880.000 water agreement with Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water System for them to become the new water supplier for the City of Cottonwood.

State funding for these replacements and repairs is essential to minimizing the financial burden on the taxpayers of the community as the total project will warrant bonds and loans. Without this investment, the upgrades will be pushed out on a longer timeline and the taxpayers will have to take on the full burden of a phase one project costing upwards of \$15 Million in vital infrastructure replacement and new drinking water source connection.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to support House File 651 on March 6, 2025 and stand behind the people of Minnesota that are in dire need of these vital infrastructure needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Teather Bliss
City Administrator
City of Cottonwood

CITY OF COTTONWOOD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

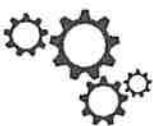
COMMUNITY



1,180 Residents
300 Households



Lakeview School District
714 Students K-12
3.9% Growth Rate - Last 3 Years

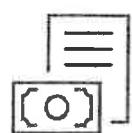


50 Commercial Businesses
Largest Employer: North Star (350)



\$108.50 Average Bill
Sewer Rates: \$20.50 Base
\$8.50 per 1,000 gallons
Water Rates: \$13.00 Base
\$6.50 per 1,000 gallons

PROJECT



\$8 Million Request
\$28 Million Total Project



Manganese levels of 1,600 ppb
Connect to Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water



2025 Clean Water IUP - Part B
Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure
2025 Drinking Water IUP - Ineligible
Insufficient Points
Water Distribution Infrastructure
2025 Drinking Water IUP - Part B
Emerging Contaminants, LPRW Connection



Five Phase Plan
Phase One - 10,000 feet of
various utility lines