

# FRESHWATER

March 11, 2026

Chair Rep. Josh Heintzeman  
Chair Rep. Peter Fischer  
Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy  
State Capitol Room G3  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**Re: HF4019 Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer appropriation permits eligibility criteria expanded**

Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer and committee members,

Based on our expertise in groundwater science and sustainable groundwater management, Freshwater does not support changes to water-use permitting for the Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer as outlined in HF4019.

By expanding use of the aquifer to agricultural irrigation, this bill would jeopardize the region's future drinking water supply, Minnesota's first priority water use according to Minnesota Statute 103G.261. Water levels in this aquifer have already dropped by more than 200 feet in some areas, prompting the current usage restrictions for potable use only.

The Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer is unique in that it recharges very slowly with groundwater ages ranging from 1,000 up to 60,000 years. This means that, if overused, the resource will not recover for many lifetimes. The Minnesota DNR has conducted extensive study of the aquifer in determining the need for its protection, which is based on science and intended to sustain this critical drinking water supply for the long term.

We urge the committee to maintain current protections needed for the Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer and to oppose HF4019.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on behalf of Minnesota.



Michelle Stockness, PE

Executive Director, Freshwater