



May 29, 2025

Representative Fischer, Senator Hawj, and Representative Heintzeman:

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, a statewide organization representing more than 6,300 businesses and their more than half a million employees, supports certain provisions and opposes others in the proposed Omnibus Environment Bill Language (Language).

First, the Chamber supports the inclusion of Article 6, Environmental Permitting Reform. Article 6 reflects the compromise made from legislation introduced on a bipartisan and bicameral basis. It makes meaningful improvements to our state's process and includes recommendations from the Minnesota Chamber Foundation Report, [Streamlining Minnesota's Environmental Permitting Process: Essential For Economic Growth](#). Minnesota's permitting process takes too long, costs too much, and is too uncertain. The compromises reached in Article 6 takes helpful steps towards improving timelines and attracting more investment.

The Chamber also supports implementing recommendations from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and making other needed steps regarding PFAS regulation. Updating the definition of "internal components" limits prohibitions to only places that may contact a person. It also exempts juvenile off-highway vehicles, snowmobiles, and e-bikes; allows for sale of consumer products with PFAS in electronic or internal components; and provides extensions for compliance with regulations for airport hangars with fixed firefighting foam systems.

The Chamber supports funding for key programs as well. The Language includes \$444,000 over the next two years for Minnesota Business First Stop and provides the agency with tools for additional permitting assistance, including funding for developing a platform to identify sites with the least amount of conflict for complex development projects. Clean Air Minnesota (CAM) is a partnership of government, nonprofits, and the private sector to find voluntary solutions that reduce air pollution. We appreciate the support for CAM.

However, the Chamber has serious concerns with increasing water appropriation and use fees. The cost would nearly double over existing levels. Instead of enacting arbitrary increases in statute, the Chamber and our members prefer a rulemaking process that's transparent to the public and offers all parties time to participate.

I look forward to working with the Working Group to improve Minnesota's economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Morley", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Andrew Morley
Director, Environmental Policy
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
amorley@mnchamber.com
763-221-7523

380 St. Peter Street, Suite 1050, St. Paul, MN 55102
www.mnchamber.com

May 29, 2025

Co-chairs Heintzeman, Fischer, and Hawj, and Members of the Environment Bill Working Group, Minnesota AgriGrowth appreciates the thoughtful due diligence the Environment Bill Working Group has put forward to fund the state's environmental and conservation programs and improve environmental permitting. Minnesota's agriculture and food economy accounts for more than 10% of the state's overall economy, contributing approximately 330,000 jobs and \$40.3 billion in economic activity. Permitting and conservation programs are crucial for growing our economy.

Environmental permitting

Improving Minnesota's permitting process is not a partisan issue. The reforms included in the Work Group's recommendations are a byproduct of strong engagement from the MPCA, the state's business and agricultural community, building trades, and environmental advocates. These reforms focus on improving the process without altering federal and state environmental standards and regulations.

Specifically, the recommendations include providing greater clarity for environmental review for new and expanded feedlots. This is important as Minnesota continues to be a leader in turkey and pork production while also strengthening its essential role in dairy and beef production.

The recommendations provided new opportunities to expedite permit writing if the applicant chooses to cover the costs and there is mutual agreement on timelines. Finally, it changes the process to give permit applicants five additional days to fix permit application deficiencies before losing their place in the permitting queue at the MPCA.

These reforms are continued progress in removing pinch points in the state's onerous environmental permitting process. Minnesota AgriGrowth looks forward to engaging with the legislature in 2026 to make even more progress on protecting Minnesota's environment and building a robust economy.

Water appropriation permit fee increase

Minnesota AgriGrowth does not currently support the water appropriation permit fee increases for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR's ability to complete aquifer tests and issue water appropriation permits on time has become a serious concern impacting Minnesota's farm economy. Permitting reform must also

address DNR's processing of water appropriation permit applications. Minnesota AgriGrowth proposed several important reforms this legislative session. We're committed to working with the DNR this summer to find possible common ground and push these reforms during the 2026 legislative session. Without reforms, Minnesota AgriGrowth cannot support the Working Group's recommendation for permit fee increases.

Much appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darin Broton', written in a cursive style.

Darin Broton, Executive Director
Minnesota AgriGrowth



Chair Senator FOUNG Hawj
Representative Josh Heintzeman
Environment Bill Working Group

RE: Omnibus Environment Bill

Dear Chair Hawj and Representative Heintzeman:

On behalf of APEX, we support the permitting reform provisions in the Omnibus Environment Bill as they advance collective efforts to make our regulatory process more efficient, timely and transparent.

APEX, a private sector-led business development organization, is dedicated to fostering sustainable growth in Northeast Minnesota and Northwest Wisconsin. Our investor-members comprise nearly 100 of the region's most influential organizations, all of whom share a deep commitment to business growth and community vitality.

Our work is about building relationships and collaborative problem-solving around key issues experienced by the businesses in our region. Regulation and permitting are key focus areas. Over the past two years, we've participated in and led conversations on the Minnesota Chamber's "Streamlining Environmental Permitting" report, the MPCA's Cumulative Impacts state-wide community discussions, and collaborated with a variety of regional and state leaders to guide discussions, all part of understanding diverse stakeholder perspectives and ways we can improve.

Permitting timelines affect our state's economy. Minnesota would achieve meaningful economic gains if permit issuance timeframes were improved as measured by economic activity, household income and full-time jobs. We can streamline the process without compromising our high environmental protections.

This environmental permitting bill is essential in transforming Minnesota into a more welcoming place. We need to provide the same regulatory certainty and timeliness to all key sectors, including agriculture, food processors, forestry, manufacturing and mining. We can do this without compromising our standards while becoming a global leader and sustaining healthy communities.

The permitting reform provisions in this bill are important to pass this legislative session. Thank you for your time and dedication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel A. Johnson".

Rachel Johnson
APEX President & CEO
218.591.7244
rachel@apexgetsbusiness.com

Sent via email



ATV Minnesota
P.O. Box 300 Stacy, MN 55079
www.atvmn.org - 1-800-442-8826
ATV Minnesota – Your Voice to RIDE



May 29, 2025

Representative Josh Heintzeman
Representative Peter Fischer
Senator Fong Hawj
Minnesota Legislature Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Heintzeman, Representative Fischer, and Senator Hawj:

On behalf of ATV Minnesota and our thousands of members and local ATV clubs across the state, thank you for including a \$952,000 appropriation to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources from the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) account in the 2025 Omnibus Environment Bill. These funds—directed toward grants for design, engineering, construction, and right-of-way acquisition for ATV trails—represent a vital investment in outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, and rural economic vitality.

The ATV Dedicated Account exists specifically to support responsible ATV recreation, and these funds are being used as intended: to expand and maintain trail systems that meet modern expectations while safeguarding Minnesota's natural resources. Allowable uses of this account include everything from initial trail planning and environmental review, to construction and signage, to long-term maintenance—all components that ensure safe, sustainable riding experiences for all users.

Minnesota's ATV trail system is not only a recreational treasure, but also an economic driver. According to University of Minnesota Extension studies, ATV riders contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to local economies through tourism, lodging, retail, and service spending—particularly in Greater Minnesota. These dollars support small businesses, create jobs, and keep rural communities vibrant.

Our members take pride in helping develop and maintain trails that are environmentally sound and aligned with local, state and federal standards. Every proposed trail undergoes a thorough approval process involving local governments, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and often tribal and federal partners. These projects are designed to minimize erosion, avoid sensitive habitats, and reflect best practices in natural resource management. We work collaboratively with landowners, conservationists, and public agencies to create a trail network that benefits everyone.

Thank you again for recognizing the value of ATV recreation and for investing in infrastructure that supports safe, sustainable outdoor experiences. ATV Minnesota looks forward to continuing our partnership with the Legislature, the DNR, and local stakeholders to grow and improve Minnesota's trail system in a responsible way.

Sincerely,

Ron Potter

President, ATV Minnesota



May 29, 2025

RE: Omnibus Environment Bill agreement

Co-Chairs Fischer, Hawj, Heintzeman, and members of the Environment Working Group:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts with you today on this Omnibus Environment bill. We are grateful for your diligent work crafting this agreement, especially over the past several weeks. While this legislation is far from perfect, there are wins in here that every legislator and Minnesotan should be proud of.

First and foremost, this agreement ensures that the state agencies that oversee our clean air, clean water and outdoor spaces have the funding they need to do their jobs. Making sure DNR, BWSR and MPCA can continue to operate smoothly is a crucial step each biennium, and this bill gets that done.

On top of that, this bill makes the appropriations from the dedicated lottery proceeds that are held in the Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund and stands up the new Community Grants program. Together, these will make sure that lottery proceeds continue to support our great outdoors in every community across the state. Further, clarifying that aquatic invasive species programs and trail improvements can be funded by Community Grants should help the program benefit even more Minnesotans.

Article 4 includes policies which should help people more easily enjoy outdoor recreation. Reduced license fees for veterans and continuous bass fishing seasons will help more Minnesotans get out on the water. We also look forward to the DNR report on outdoor recreation license endorsements and hope you all will seriously consider whether these might make outdoor recreation even more accessible to all Minnesotans.

Overall, we greatly appreciate all the work you have put into reaching this agreement and look forward to its swift and resounding passage and eventually being signed into law.

Sincerely,

Nels Paulsen
Policy Director
nels@conservationminnesota.org

James Lehner
Policy Associate
james@conservationminnesota.org

May 29, 2025

Minnesota House & Senate
Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group
Capitol 123
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group - Article 6, Improvement to Environmental Permitting in Minnesota

Dear Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer, Chair Hawj, and Working Group Members,

On behalf of Clean Energy Economy MN (CEEM), we write today in support of Article 6 in the Omnibus Environment Bill to improve the permitting process in Minnesota. Building on the momentum of last year's successful energy permitting reforms, this bipartisan push represents a crucial next step in making Minnesota a better place to do business. The comprehensive approach will benefit all companies requiring environmental permits, streamlining processes while maintaining Minnesota's high environmental standards.

CEEM is an industry-led, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing the business voice of energy efficiency and clean energy in Minnesota. We are focused on educating Minnesotans about the economic benefits of transitioning to a clean energy economy. Our business membership comprises over 70 clean energy companies ranging from start-up businesses to Fortune 100 and 500 corporations that employ tens of thousands of Minnesotans across the state. CEEM is committed to delivering a reliable, affordable, and clean energy future where all Minnesota businesses and citizens will thrive.

Our members consistently tell us that permitting uncertainty and delays create significant barriers to business growth and investment in Minnesota. This includes manufacturing energy-efficient equipment, developing clean energy projects, and delivering related products and services. Moving projects forward in a timely, predictable manner is essential to their success and continued investment in our state.

Last year's energy infrastructure reforms demonstrated how thoughtful permitting improvements can unlock economic potential and jobs while preserving environmental protections. By extending similar efficiencies across all economic sectors, this legislation will help create the predictable business environment necessary to retain, grow, and attract jobs and investment throughout Minnesota's entire economy.

As Minnesota positions itself as a leader in the clean energy economy, companies need confidence to predictably and efficiently plan for developing projects, deploying capital, and expanding operations here. Now is a crucial time for new and innovative industries, such as Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), the expansion of anaerobic digestion, and the continued leadership in advanced biofuels, biobased chemicals, and biomass-to-energy production. This legislation provides certainty while maintaining the environmental standards that make Minnesota an attractive place to live and work.

Common sense permitting reform is not a partisan issue but a practical one about making Minnesota more competitive. By improving permitting efficiency and transparency across all economic sectors, we can better retain homegrown companies while attracting new businesses and investment to our state. Our diverse membership sees this as a critical step toward building a more robust and competitive business environment in Minnesota. We thank the committee for including Article 6 in the Omnibus Environment Bill and look forward to its passage.

Sincerely,



George Damian
Director of Government Affairs
gdamian@cleanenergyeconomymn.org



Chandra Her
Senior Policy Associate
cher@cleanenergyeconomymn.org

Minnesota Bowhunters

Continuing the Tradition



Attn: Omnibus Environmental Bill Working Group
Re: Section 13, Section 12
Date: 5/29/25
Position: We support the extension but would prefer the establishment of separate licenses and shorter seasons for crossbow use this session.

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

Section 13 - We write to express our strong opposition to the continued full inclusion of crossbows into designated archery seasons. One popular compromise to full inclusion that we find exceptionally fair and reasonable is running a crossbow season from firearm opener through the end of the year. This would preserve eight weeks of early season archery opportunity while providing over seven weeks of crossbow use which is almost four times longer than an individual can hunt with a shotgun or rifle. A separate license is important for tracking participation.

We would also like to see Minnesota start tracking and reporting on the number of individual deer hunters, average hunter experience rating by permit area, and days hunted by weapon type. This is data that we find in other Midwest States harvest reports, and it would be beneficial for evaluating the impacts of natural events and management actions.

Section 12 - While safety is not a primary concern, we have concerns about the management implications related to allowing the use of rifles during the firearm deer season. There will likely not be any R3 benefit, but it is reasonable to assume that harvest would increase. What are the management goals, current deer density data, and desired deer density for the southern zones?

Minnesota Bowhunters (MBI) was founded in 1946, and we are one of Minnesota's oldest conservation organizations. Archery is an ancient and highly accessible sport that almost everyone regardless of gender, age, or ability can enjoy. That being said, bowhunting is challenging, and that challenge/necessary practice helps sustain many of our archery clubs and stores throughout the state. Data from ND shows that ~97% of their bowhunters are capable of drawing and shooting a recurve or compound bow.

Sincerely,
Nick Amunrud

President - Minnesota Bowhunters Inc



May 29, 2025

Support for Omnibus Environment Bill and Environmental Permitting Reform

Jobs For Minnesotans, a coalition of labor, business and community leaders, commends the Working Group's actions. Our Executive Committee strongly supports the language proposed in the Omnibus Environment Bill to modernize Minnesota's environmental permitting processes, ultimately improving efficiency while maintaining accountability.

We urge swift passage of this bill to support job growth, investment, and practical permitting reform. This legislation opens up opportunities to streamline permit applications, promote facility construction and operation, and enhance the expedited permitting process—reducing delays that impact economic development and job creation.

Thank you to the Working Group and chief authors of this bill for their work so far and commitment to fostering responsible oversight while preventing unnecessary obstacles.

Sincerely,

Jobs for Minnesotans Executive Committee

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About Jobs for Minnesotans

Jobs for Minnesotans, a coalition representing business, labor and communities, supports statewide opportunities for prosperity and middle-class jobs from sustainable natural resource development in Minnesota. The organization is committed to the principle that our state can preserve both job opportunities and the environment for future generations. Jobs for Minnesotans was co-founded in 2012 by the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council representing 70,000 workers and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce representing 2,300 members and 500,000 employees. For more information, visit jobsforminnesotans.org, follow @JobsforMN on Twitter and find the coalition on [Facebook.com/Jobs4MN](https://www.facebook.com/Jobs4MN).

KEEP IT CLEAN HF 1120 TESTIMONY

Good afternoon Honorable Chair Heintzeman and Committee members. Thank you for your time today. If you get outdoors in Minnesota in the spring, summer, or fall, you will notice the thousands of lakes and rivers, parks, trails, recreation areas, forests, campgrounds, resorts, wildlife areas, beaches, and picnic areas enjoyed by the public, and managed and protected by state agencies, with help from local governments, lake associations, and NGOs.

If you are fortunate enough to enjoy overnight stays on state waters and in state parks in an RV, a houseboat, or another shelter of your choosing, you are required to follow rules for where and how to set up camp, and how to manage your garbage and waste. **In a nutshell, your shared outdoor experience is a privilege, and protecting it for future generations is required.**

Not so for Minnesotans in the ice belt. Since the popularity of ice fishing, winter camping, and recreation has exploded in the last decade, the Keep it Clean Coalition has seen an increase in leftovers of human activity on and around frozen public waters. Volunteers have worked tirelessly to bring awareness to a problem that should not exist and help our fellow humans change their attitudes and careless habits. We have a new “**litter on ice**” law. That’s a start, but it’s not enough.

The State invests our tax dollars to make public places more enjoyable and accessible. Minnesota’s economy is strongly reliant on people getting out more, and there is an expectation that users, through fees and taxes, share the costs. Nothing is free in this world.

We believe that rather than go into hibernation (leaving the management of human leftovers and cleanup efforts to local communities), state agencies must take the lead in educating the public, providing resources, and implementing the same regulations for **activities on ice** as they do for public lands and waters during **ice-out activities**.

You would never leave your bags of trash or camp toilet leftovers to pollute campsites, parks or trails. You would never accept human or pet excrement on your picnic grounds. We all pay dearly to use state lands and waters and are proud to be good stewards.

I am asking respected house members to extend management and protection of our shared resources to the ice belt. The disconnect needs to be fixed. We can’t manage and protect our natural resources three seasons of the year while disregarding what goes on during winter months on our frozen waters. We must acknowledge that people travel to enjoy winter experiences, and then stay for extended amounts of time, far from our homes and our constituencies, to have unique outdoor experiences that are ingrained in Minnesota’s constitution.

Please support **HF1120** and establish a **Statewide Keep it Clean Program** ensuring the professional management and community resources needed to protect and preserve Minnesota’s prized public waters.

Ice is water and we must work together to keep it clean.

Thank you,

Robyn Dwight
Keep it Clean Coalition member
President: Upper Red Lake Area Association
Waskish, MN



MINNESOTA DEER HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

460 PETERSON ROAD, GRAND RAPIDS, MN 55744

Phone: 1-800-450-DEER / Fax: 218-327-1349

www.mndeerhunters.com

Protecting the future of deer and deer hunting through Habitat, Education, Advocacy and Legislation

May 29th, 2025

Dear Members of the Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group:

On behalf of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA) and the thousands of hunters and outdoor enthusiasts we represent, I am writing to express our strong support for eliminating the slug zone in the state of Minnesota, and deep appreciation for including it in the agreement before you today. This legislative change is long overdue and has support throughout the state.

The establishment of the slug zone was never about safety. It was implemented to limit deer harvest in a part of the state that was seeking to increase the deer population. This population increase is no longer a goal of the residents of Southern Minnesota nor the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In fact, in parts of Southern Minnesota, intensive culling has been implemented to slow the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease. This initiative could be implemented more effectively and cost-efficiently by increasing hunter harvests using more effective, modern equipment.

Studies have shown that a switch to all legal firearms has no impact on hunter and/or public safety. Furthermore, rifles are already able to be used in the slug zone to harvest other game species. Our neighboring states have already made the change and we believe that it is past due for Minnesota to follow suit.

Furthermore, with the proposed language detailing provisions for counties to limit certain firearms within their boundaries, Minnesota's citizens will benefit from increased representation in how this legislation is implemented. The concerns expressed by certain counties in previous legislative sessions will be easily overcome with the passage of this agreement.

Minnesota has a strong tradition of cultivating lifelong conservationists and recreationalists and we believe in eliminating each barrier to entry; the slug zone being one of them.

The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association supports the elimination of the slug zone in Minnesota and urges you to support the passage of this agreement in support of the future of Minnesota's hunting and outdoor recreation traditions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jared J. Mazurek

Executive Director
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association

May 29, 2025

To: Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group

Re: Support for Permitting Reform Provisions in Article 6 of the Omnibus Environment Bill

Dear Members of the Working Group,

On behalf of Minnesota Milk Producers Association, thank you for your continued work toward a functional and forward-looking Omnibus Environment Bill. As the voice for Minnesota's dairy farmers, I write today in strong support of the permitting reform provisions included in Article 6 of the current agreement.

Permitting delays—particularly when duplicative local and state review processes are required sequentially—have hindered progress on infrastructure investments essential for both environmental stewardship and long-term farm viability. Dairy farms looking to add manure storage, modernize barns for animal care, or adopt new technologies face long, uncertain timelines that discourage improvement and innovation.

The commonsense reforms advanced in SF 570 and HF 8, now reflected in the Omnibus Environment Bill, offer meaningful change. By allowing for concurrent local and state review, these provisions protect environmental integrity while ensuring farms can move forward in a timely manner. The ability to plan, invest, and build with predictability is key to maintaining our dairy sector amid generational transition, economic volatility, and heightened environmental expectations.

Minnesota's dairy farmers are ready and willing to make responsible upgrades to their operations—let's ensure the permitting system works with them, not against them.

Thank you again for your leadership and attention to these important provisions. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Lucas Sjostrom

Executive Director

Minnesota Milk Producers Association

lucas@mnmilk.org

(320) 429-4838



**Range Association of
Municipalities and Schools**

5525 Emerald Drive

Mt. Iron, MN 55768

rams@ramsmn.org • 218.748.7651

May 29, 2025

RE: RAMS Priorities in Environment Omnibus Bill, Article 6 – Permitting Reform Improvements

Dear Members of the Environment Omnibus Bill Working Group,

On behalf of the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools, representing 70 cities, townships, and school districts on the Iron Range, I am writing to voice our support for Article 6 of the Omnibus Environment Bill. We commend the steps you have taken to reach a place where you can advance meaningful reform for timely, rigorous permitting of the state's economic interests all while upholding Minnesota's environmental standards and protecting our shared environment and natural resources.

Despite a challenging legislative climate, we are thankful for your hard work and urge you to agree to the items in Article 6, including but not limited to the following sections:

Section 1 [Permitting Efficiency Modifications] – We welcome requiring an efficiency report because it allows agency and community to interact with public-facing reporting data, increasing transparency for all. Formerly, during the application process to PCA, applicants were never given an opportunity to rectify deficiencies in their applications, leading to inconsistent rejections. This section will improve this process – and therefore the outcomes – for applicants by requiring the PCA to give applicants a 5-day window to remedy identified deficiencies in applications. Whereas the previous process evaluated for failure, this improved responsiveness coaches for outcomes.

Section 3 [Discretionary EAW Petition Modifications] – This provision improves the decision-making process, prioritizes local control, and centers the lived experience of those people closest to a decision.

Section 5 [Elimination of Requirement for Certain Scoping EAWs] – By requiring the EQB to amend its rule to remove the requirement to produce a scoping EAW where state law requires an EIS, you are improving the likelihood of an outcome and sending a message that environmental protection processes can be completed in a timely fashion.

We thank you and respectfully urge your support of the bill.

Sincerely,

Paul Peltier
Executive Director
Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS)





Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas

A Minnesota Non-profit, Tax-exempt Corporation
www.snafriends.org

May 29, 2025

2025 Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group
c/o Amy Zipko

Via E-mail
amy.zipko@house.mn.gov

Re: 2025 Omnibus Environment Bill Agreement (25-05671)
Request for Four Amendments to MN Sustainable Foraging Task Force

Dear Honorable Chairs and Working Group Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2025 Omnibus Environment Bill Agreement (25-05671), within which establishes the Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force.

Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas is a Minnesota non-profit, tax exempt corporation whose mission is to advocate for the establishment, use, management, and perpetuation of Minnesota's scientific and natural areas in an **undisturbed natural state**.

We, and the other undersigned organizations, respectfully request four amendments to the Sustainable Foraging Task Force language:

1. Lines 149.11-149.12: The Sustainable Foraging Task Force includes "... four members from conservation or outdoor recreation organizations ...". This language is vague enough to allow the appointment of outdoor foraging recreation organizations – thus creating an imbalance in favor of foraging organizations.

Therefore, "outdoor recreation organizations" should be deleted from this section.

2. Lines 150.1-150.5: The following underlined language is vague: "(3) develop recommendations for science-based, including traditional ecological knowledge, foraging guidelines for state lands that balance public access and foraging opportunities with conservation needs. The recommendations must be in the form of draft statutory or rule language and must be consistent with Indigenous and other cultural practices and traditions ...". The historical record indicates that some "cultural traditions" resulted in extinctions and severe loss of habitat. We trust this is not what the legislature intends to allow.

Therefore, the language should be amended to read "... cultural **conservation** practices and traditions."

3. Lines 150.1-150.5: Of course, we are supportive of foraging rules on state lands. However, current state law does **not** allow foraging on state scientific and natural areas:

“State scientific and natural areas; purpose; resource and site qualifications; administration; designation. (a) A state scientific and natural area shall be established to **protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed natural** state those natural features which possess exceptional scientific or educational value.”
[Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 5(a). Emphasis added.]

“State scientific and natural areas **shall** be administered ... in a manner consistent with the purposes of this subdivision to preserve, perpetuate, and **protect** from **unnatural** influences the scientific and educational resources within them.”
[Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 5(c). Emphasis added.]

Therefore, to avoid any perceived inconsistency with current state law, we respectfully request the following addition to lines 150.1-.150.5:

“Consistent with current law, foraging shall not be allowed on state scientific and natural areas.”

4. Lines 151.14-151.16: The DNR remains hamstrung from adopting emergency rules to protect natural resources from foraging until July 1, 2026. The following language should be **deleted**:

“MORATORIUM ON FORAGING RULES. The commissioner of natural resources shall not commence or complete any rulemaking on foraging before July 1, 2026.”

Summary of Requested Amendments

1. Amend lines 149.11-149.23 to read:

“(5) four members from conservation or ~~outdoor recreation~~ organizations, appointed by the commissioner of natural resources.”

2. Amend lines 150.1-150.5, adding two changes, to read:

“(3) develop recommendations for science-based, including traditional ecological knowledge, foraging guidelines for state lands that balance public access and foraging opportunities with conservation needs. The recommendations must be in the form of draft statutory or rule language and must be consistent with Indigenous and other cultural **conservation** practices and traditions. **Consistent with current law, foraging shall not be allowed on state scientific and natural areas; ...**”

May 29, 2025
Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group
Re: Sustainable Foraging Task Force

3. Delete lines 151.14-151.16:

~~“MORATORIUM ON FORAGING RULES. The commissioner of natural resources shall not commence or complete any rulemaking on foraging before July 1, 2026.”~~

On behalf of Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas, and the other undersigned organizations, I **thank you** for your kind consideration.

Very truly yours,

Thomas E. Casey

Thomas E. Casey, Board Chair
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas, Inc.

Please send reply to:
2854 Cambridge Lane
Mound, MN 55364
(952) 472-1099 (telephone)
tcasey@frontiernet.net

TEC/tc

The following organizations have signed onto this letter:



**Izaak Walton League of America
Minnesota Division**



**Scott Milburn, President
Minnesota Native Plant Society**

May 29, 2025

Omnibus Environment Bill Working Group

Re: Sustainable Foraging Task Force



Pollinator Friendly Alliance



**Terry Gipps, President
Alliance for Sustainability**

Representative Peter Fischer
Environment and Natural Resources Policy
& Finance Committee
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Senator Founq Hawj
Senate Environment, Climate and
Legacy Committee
3231 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue W.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Representative Josh Heintzeman
Environment and Natural Resources Policy
& Finance Committee
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Environment Finance Omnibus Bill Agreement

May 28, 2025

Dear Chairs Fischer, Heintzeman, Hawj, and members of the Working Group:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the agreement of the Work Group for the Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus bill, and share how we expect several proposed items will impact people, nature, and the state's ability to address challenges facing Minnesota's climate and biodiversity. We recognize the challenges the Work Group and legislature faced toward balancing the budget while meeting pressing needs, and appreciate the good steps taken in this bill.

Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources Recommendations

Thank you for reflecting the deliberative work of the LCCMR whose recommendations to the legislature are based on thorough review and vetting of projects aligned with strategic priorities for the state, and for including their recommendations in the Working Group's agreement for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust (ENRTF) appropriations. The over \$103 million in funds from ENRTF will go toward important programs that help provide habitat, improve water quality, sequester carbon, expand access to the outdoors, and more.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grants

We are pleased to see the appropriation to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for one year to implement the Community Grants program associated with the voter-approved renewal of the lottery dedication, which expanded the amount of ENRTF that can be spent for the purpose of creating this program. This program is poised to provide a needed benefit to communities seeking to tackle environmental challenges and provide access to the outdoors all across the state. We appreciate the 1.5% of the ENRTF that voters approved overwhelmingly in November 2024 is designated toward that purpose, to provide the first year of funding for that program.

Appropriations:

Reforestation Wildfire Response – We are pleased to see the bill repurposes \$2.195 million in unspent funds from the 2023 appropriation for drought-killed tree seedlings to instead

address DNR's ability to reforest state forest lands in response to wildfires. Minnesota's forests are the state's best nature-based tool for sequestering carbon and protecting water quality and quantity, while also providing habitat, outdoor recreation and forest products benefits. This appropriation will help to fund much-needed reforestation activities that we hope continue to be a shared responsibility along with the state's capital investments.

Groundwater Permit Fee Increases – DNR has faced significant unmet needs and growing challenges facing both water quantity and quality; proceeding with this fee increase will help DNR to focus on responding to growing challenges facing water in the state.

Red River Mediation Agreement – We are glad to see a \$264,000 per year investment included in the bill. As interest in water storage expands in Minnesota, the concept used by watershed districts in the Red River Basin is demonstrating results for flood reduction and water quality benefits. Multi-purpose water storage projects are a critical approach to meeting water quality while reducing flood impacts to communities and individuals.

Now more than ever, continued investments in nature are crucial to ensure Minnesota's natural spaces are prepared to withstand the challenges of a changing climate and threats to biodiversity. We thank the Work Group members and your fellow legislators for your work to thoughtfully steward investments and policy that support on-the-ground activities that bolster Minnesota's climate, land and water.

Thank you for your work in support of nature.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota



Mariana Martins Carvalho
Capitol Pathways Intern
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota



Angelica Day
Government Relations Specialist
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota