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Representative Fue Lee
House Capital Investment Committee
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

February 23, 2022

Dear Chair Lee and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for HF3459, a bill to provide bonding investment for water storage under the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Continuing the benefits of a water storage program is important across the state to improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding, in addition to other benefits.

Stream flow has increased widely across southern and western Minnesota as a result of changing land-use and climate. This has led to greater nutrient loads and in-stream erosion rates. Increased flows also threaten private property and public infrastructure. To mitigate these negative impacts, there is a need to reduce the downstream flows carrying sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus to lakes and rivers resulting in algal blooms, water quality impairments and reduced recreation opportunities.

We have long known that high flows and flooding are exacerbating erosion and nutrient problems for water quality. We also know that intense rain events and subsequent flooding have increased in recent years and will continue to be an issue unless action is taken to increase storage of water on the landscape.

Research conducted by scientists at The Nature Conservancy, shows that **investing \$1 today in floodplain protection and water storage provides \$5 savings in the future** from avoided flood damage. Water storage, and protection of floodplains and working lands are important tools to accomplish this. It will be critical for the sake of water quality, erosion prevention, flood prevention, and resilience to climate change that we find more ways to spread out and slow down water across our landscape by investing in water storage on the landscape.

Thank you for considering bonding investment in this program.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Manager
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota