

March 25, 2019

Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division  
407 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hansen:

As the State Coordinator for Pheasants Forever in Minnesota, I write today in support of HF1624, a bill to provide general fund appropriations for the operations of Minnesota's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). As a key partner in delivering conservation on the ground, we believe the state should invest stable, general fund dollars to support the good work of our state SWCDs.

Soil and Water Conservation District staff are the primary source for technical and financial assistance for private landowners implementing conservation practices. Minnesota continues to invest in our natural resources and has successfully leveraged state funds to bring federal dollars to our state. SWCDs are the crucial delivery mechanism for these dollars to reach Minnesotans. SWCDs make sure landowners know about available programs, the importance of conservation on their land, and then partner with landowners to design, install and share the cost of conservation for a multitude of benefits.

Pheasants Forever has a long history of working together with SWCDs to further a common mission of conservation program delivery aimed at creating wildlife habitat and water quality improvement. At the local level SWCDs are the "go to" for the local producers and landowners for their expertise and knowledge. To continue providing this service, SWCDs need an ongoing general fund investment.

As you continue your work on the budget for the 2020-2021 biennium, I urge you to prioritize this investment in SWCDs and include HF1624 in your budget. Thank you for your consideration and for your hard work on behalf of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eran Sandquist". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized initial "E".

Eran Sandquist  
State Coordinator - Minnesota