



March 24, 2022

Re: Support for H.F. 4398

Dear Chair Lieblich and members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee:

The League of Minnesota Cities appreciates the opportunity to submit comments supporting section 22 of H.F. 4398. The advisory council on water supply systems and wastewater treatment facilities previously played a valuable role in coordination and communication between wastewater and public water supply operators and the state agencies that regulate and certify them. Unfortunately, the group's existence was allowed to sunset several years ago. Since then, efforts to reconstitute it by the administration have fallen through the cracks in budget negotiations. The League supports restoring that group and its functions in statute as is done in Section 22 of this bill. We are not aware of any opposition or controversy with that outcome occurring.

With rapidly changing state and federal regulations, training and certification challenges that make staffing and retention issues even harder at municipal facilities, and emergency management situations like we have experienced over the pandemic, this advisory group is needed by both the facility operators and by the state agencies working with them. It helps the work of both be more informed, targeted, and effective, which also results in saved state and local taxpayer dollars.

We appreciate the work of the Department of Health, the Pollution Control Agency, the author, and the committee to consider what resources cities will need to continue to provide safe, reliable, and affordable water and wastewater services to our residents and businesses. Please consider including the provisions of Section 22 in the committee's supplemental budget recommendations for the 2022 session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig A. Johnson".

Craig A. Johnson
Intergovernmental Relations Representative
League of Minnesota Cities