

# Policy-Related and Technical Changes



## Summary

Each year, the DNR proposes policy-related and technical changes to Minnesota statutes that deal with programs the DNR administers. This year's proposed changes will help the department manage the state's natural resources adaptively and respond to public input.

The 2026 policy and technical bill focuses on changes related to ecosystem management and technical corrections to existing statutes.

## Proposal

### Aquatic Resources Management

This portion of the proposal would make changes that improve the agency's ability to proactively manage the state's plants and animals.

#### Required Reporting of Black Carp

This proposed change would add black carp to the list of invasive carp species required to be reported if captured. Timely reporting of public encounters will improve the success of management and removal efforts. Black carp were unintentionally introduced to the United States from Asia in the 1970s. Although none have been captured in Minnesota, their populations continue to expand in the southern U.S. through flooding and movement across connected waterways, including the Mississippi River. Recent sightings have also been reported in the Illinois River and the Ohio River.

#### Lake Superior Burbot Commercial Harvest

This proposed change would allow commercial fish harvesters to retain and sell incidentally captured burbot. Burbot that are caught in gill nets often die while in the net or are in very poor condition when nets are checked. This change would prevent those fish from going to waste and align regulations of unintentionally caught burbot with those of similarly caught lake trout.

#### Exempting Dead, Eviscerated Carp from Prohibited Invasive Species Regulations

This proposed change would allow anglers and agency staff to transport and dispose of or utilize eviscerated invasive carp. This will provide agency efficiencies and provide businesses and individuals with greater opportunity to make productive use of the remaining carcass, while continuing to ensure the state is minimizing threats of introduction in Minnesota waters. Currently, because invasive carp are prohibited invasive species, businesses and individuals wishing to use processed (dead) carp in Minnesota must obtain permits.



## Expanded Harvest for Lake Superior Lake Trout

The proposed change would provide flexibility in the harvest of Lake Superior lake trout by removing a harvest cap. The harvest caps identified in statute are no longer necessary as lake trout populations in Lake Superior are now recovered and can sustain additional harvest.

## Improve DNR Business and Policy Practices

This portion of the proposal makes technical changes to existing statute that improve the agency's business and policy practices.

### Boater Education Policy Corrections

This change would treat exempt boaters (born before 1988) the same as boaters who have the watercraft operator's permit and allow exempt boaters the abilities to supervise youth operators and rent watercraft. This will simplify rules, make it easier for Minnesotans to understand and comply with the law and align more closely with what the legislature intended when the law was first passed.

### Off-road Vehicle State Trail Pass Clarification

This change would remove the requirement that the state trail pass be viewable on off-road vehicles to conform to similar language relating to snowmobiles. Currently, one statute indicates the pass must be viewable, while another indicates it only needs to be available for officer inspection. This will provide consistency in how state trail passes are displayed to provide clarity to users and enforcement staff when the new electronic licensing system is fully implemented.

### Electronic Licensing Issuing Fee Clarification

This is a technical change to reflect that the new Electronic Licensing System will provide the amount of the issuing fee on the receipt rather than the license.

## Hunting/Fishing License Voluntary Invalidation

This proposal would allow license holders to request that the DNR invalidate a resident hunting or fishing license. Invalidation may become necessary for people that change their residency from Minnesota and are prohibited from possessing resident licenses in more than one state. Currently, people must wait until their Minnesota resident license year expires, delaying their ability to participate in hunting or fishing as a legal resident in another state.

### DNR License and Vehicle Registration Fraud

This change would create new statutory language to make it a crime to create, use or display fraudulent DNR licenses, watercraft and recreational vehicle registrations, or permits. Currently it is not a crime to make, display, or pass off a fraudulent DNR license, watercraft or recreational vehicle registration or permit. DNR enforcement staff are reporting increases in the use of artificial intelligence to create fraudulent licenses and permits.

### Public Water Suppliers Records Terminology

This is a technical change to reflect the industry standard language associated with water accounting. In moving to a more specific and complete understanding of a supplier's water system, no water should be "unaccounted". Per the American Water Works manual for Water Audits and Loss Control Programs, what was previously termed "unaccounted" is now considered either a real or apparent loss. This change will encourage public water supply permittees to identify the specific places where water losses occur, which clarifies what they need to do to prevent losses. Reporting real and apparent losses helps water suppliers target investments, use resources more efficiently, and conserve water — especially during drought and rising demand.

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