



952-854-1317

PO Box 22262, St. Paul, MN 55122

www.mnlakesandrivers.org

March 13, 2023

TO: Chair Hansen & Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

RE: Funding provided for scope of work for a plan to promote and protect clean water in Minnesota for the next 50 years, and money appropriated.

Greetings,

My name is Jeff Forester and I am Executive Director of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates.

I want to thank Senator Morrison for bringing HF 2193 forward. It is critically important that Minnesota take steps to get a clear and detailed picture of the future of MN water projected into the future.

In the last decade there have been more and more red flags with both the quantity and quality of water in Minnesota. The drawdown of aquifers, contamination of local water supplies with nitrates, wells running dry, lake levels falling while others flood local infrastructure, and toxic blue green algae blooms are all becoming more common.

This degradation and potential over exploitation of water within Minnesota is coming at a time when intense drought in other parts of the country are giving rise to plans to export Minnesota's water across the continent.

Our group uses the phrase, "Water Connects Us All," which is both practically true and aspirational. Minnesota is one of just a few places on Earth where three continental-sized watersheds emerge. Water in Minnesota flows up the Red River across Canada to the arctic

circle, east from the North Shore through the great lakes to the Atlantic, and down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.

Minnesota is literally the headwater of the eastern half of North America. This is a great blessing, but also a significant responsibility. We must lead the nation in managing water. As the headwaters of the continent, we set the baseline for both water quantity and quality for much of the nation and continent. What we do in Minnesota matters and it is our responsibility to get it right.

HF 2193 is a great first step. Our water solutions will not only involve hard science, on the ground mitigations, but also a restructuring of our regulatory and cultural systems.

Our current regulatory processes, which were developed ad hoc over a century of legislative sessions to address new issues as they arose, lacks a cohesive strategic focus. Water is now governed by an alphabet soup of agencies. As vapor in the sky, it is the purview of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Once it falls to the ground much depends on where it falls. If it falls on a farmers field, perhaps the MPCA and Department of Agriculture come into play. If it falls on a road as snow, the rules of the MN DOT come into play with salting guidelines. If it falls in a city, the city can impact it. As it flows off the land into a local lake or stream, it is the purview of MN DNR and MPCA. Once it reaches a river, the Army Corp of Engineers comes into play.

Water just flows around and across these entangled jurisdictions, becoming impaired in different ways by the many different landscapes and different regulatory gaps it encounters.

This bill, HF 2193, is a very good first step towards disentangling this social and jurisdictional Gordian Knot. It matters because Minnesotans inherited an incredible and increasingly valuable heritage, clean and healthy aquatic systems. It matters because Minnesota is the headwaters of the eastern half of North America. No place east of the 100th meridian will have cleaner water than Minnesota. To be successful we must take a deep dive into water issues with an eye towards the period of unprecedented change in our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Forester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "F".

Jeff Forester, E.D. MLR



952-854-1317

PO Box 22262, St. Paul, MN 55122

www.mnlakesandrivers.org

March 13, 2023

TO: Chair Hansen & Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

RE: Legislative Water Commission reestablished, and appointments provided.

Greetings,

The Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates, MLR is writing in support of HF 2076, Legislative Water Commission reestablished, and appointments provided.

MLR has had numerous occasions to present to the Legislative Water Commission over the last few years. There is no more important resource than water. Not only is water the basis for all life. Climate change is increasing, year by year, the value and importance of water will grow. As climate change impacts water in the atmosphere and across the landscape, water will become Minnesota's most valuable resource.

The Legislative Water Commission provides the consistent and ongoing focus on the many complex water issues that are emerging as climate impacts accelerate. The Legislative Water Commission serves a vital function providing continuity among the many organizations and agencies whose work involves protecting or enhancing water resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Forester".

Jeff Forester, E.D. MLR



Protecting
Minnesota's lake
and river heritage
since 1994

952-854-1317

PO Box 22262, St. Paul, MN 55122

www.mnlakesandrivers.org

March 13, 2023

TO: Chair Hansen & Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

RE: Support for HF2076 - Pollution Control Agency citizen membership reinstated.

Greetings,

The Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates is writing in support of HF 2076, Pollution Control Agency citizen membership reinstated.

The citizens board was a key element of the structure when the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, MPCA was created in 1967. Experience has demonstrated that much of the early success of the MPCA, both in reducing pollution, improving water, and enlisting public support for MPCA programs, was due to the existence of the citizens board. Without the citizen membership the voices of citizens from rural, greater and urban Minnesota have been lost. Concerns have not been adequately addressed. Control of pollutants, like PFAS, agricultural runoff and others has taken much longer and actions have been uneven. It is time to restore citizen membership to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Forester".

Jeff Forester, E.D. MLR