



March 17th, 2025

Rep. Josh Heintzeman, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

RE: Support for HF1355, First Engrossment

On behalf of Waterfront Restoration, I support House File 1355, first engrossment, as it establishes essential safety standards to save lives without imposing excessive burdens. However, we are concerned that additional proposals or amendments could go beyond necessary protections, leading to unintended environmental and human health consequences. If SCUBA hand-harvesting becomes too costly for homeowners or agencies, they will resort to more harmful alternatives like machines or chemicals.

Both tragedies appear to have resulted from a complete lack of basic training. If these workers had been SCUBA-certified and equipped with a buoyancy control device, they likely would have survived. House File 1355 effectively addresses these gaps.

SCUBA lake weed removal is a vital tool against invasive species like Eurasian watermilfoil, which has spread aggressively across Minnesota's lakes, degrading water quality and recreation. Thousands of homeowners, lake associations, and government agencies rely on SCUBA removal because alternative methods have serious downsides.

Aquatic herbicides often lack long-term safety studies and can cause algae blooms, muck buildup, and herbicide-resistant weeds. Harvesting machines, meanwhile, are difficult to decontaminate and risk spreading invasive species statewide.

The young men who lost their lives deserve to be honored with meaningful action that prevents future tragedies. We can achieve this while avoiding unintended consequences. I urge the committee to uphold the bill's balance of safety and feasibility to protect both workers and the environment.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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