



# MASWCD

## Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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February 26, 2026

Representative Mary Franson and Representative Fue Lee  
Co-Chairs of the House Capital Investment Committee

Chairs Franson and Lee and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD), I appreciate the opportunity to share our support for \$9 million in bonding for the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program. This important program through the state Board of Water and Soil Resources is administered locally by Soil and Water Conservation Districts, working with interested landowners to enroll marginal agricultural land into conservation easements.

As you know, Minnesota has an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture known as the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP). Minnesota's CREP, through the RIM Reserve program, leverages significant federal funds. The federal dollars come in the form of landowner payments through USDA's Conservation Reserve Program.

MN CREP helps us make strides in achieving our water quality goals and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, through wetland restorations (which also offer water storage on the landscape), riparian buffers, and wellhead protection easements. The easements also provide significant carbon sequestration benefits on the private lands voluntarily enrolled in the program.

I would also like to highlight that like many other capital investments, RIM Reserve wetland restorations have asset preservation needs over time to ensure the structural components of the wetlands continue to provide their public value in perpetuity. We strongly support a RIM Reserve bonding appropriation that provides funds for those asset preservation needs.

Thank you, Chair Pappas and Committee Members, for your continued support of water quality and wildlife habitat in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Chuck Rau

President, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts