

April 16, 2024

Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

We write to you, as dedicated members of Minnesota's conservation community, to express our support of the funding recommendations for the Outdoor Heritage Fund forwarded to you by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and packaged into HF4124, the Legacy Finance Omnibus bill.

This nation-leading Outdoor Heritage Fund was created when Minnesotans overwhelmingly voted in 2008 in favor of the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment. With that vote, Minnesotans called for acceleration of conservation in Minnesota and full transparency of spending decisions and outcomes. The structure and process followed by the LSOHC has met and continues to meet those expectations.

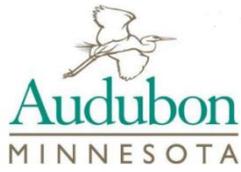
This year's initial and supplemental funding packages were unanimously approved by the LSOHC before being submitted to the legislature. The recommendations contain 51 high priority conservation projects across the state, in addition to more projects that will be funded through the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program. The selected projects have been thoroughly vetted by the LSOHC through its competitive, public process, which received over **\$373 million in requests** and resulted in recommendations to you that total \$192.711 million.

In considering full approval of the recommendations, we encourage you to reflect on the following:

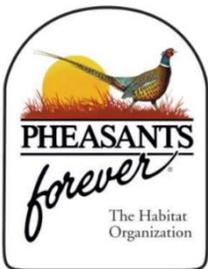
1. LSOHC members are citizens and legislators chosen for their expertise in conservation from a statewide perspective. The LSOHC is well-qualified to select projects that are urgent and most likely to return positive results from taxpayer investment.
2. The LSOHC's competitive grant application process is thorough, fair and transparent. It demands that proposals are well-designed, high-priority, science-based projects that address conservation goals enumerated by LSOHC and state plans.
3. The LSOHC adheres to a rigorous review process each year to determine its final recommendations for the Legislature. It prioritizes projects based upon several criteria, including urgency, reasonableness and ability of the proposer to achieve the outcomes.
4. The conservation projects recommended by the LSOHC are urgent and ready to implement.
5. LSOHC and the Minnesota DNR developed the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program, which sub-grants funding to smaller, community-level conservation projects. This popular Outdoor Heritage Fund program funds projects up to \$500,000.

The LSOHC package presented to you is worthy of your support. We are available as a resource to you and thank you for your support of conservation in Minnesota.

Respectfully submitted by the following organizations,



THE CONSERVATION FUND



The Outdoor Heritage Fund created by the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment “may be spent only to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.”



*Working to protect the Mississippi River
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.*

101 East Fifth Street
Suite 2000
Saint Paul, MN 55101

651-222-2193
www.fmr.org
info@fmr.org

Monday, April 15th

Re: HF4124 DE2 - Clean Water Fund appropriations

Chair Leon Lillie
Minnesota House Legacy Finance Committee
365 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Lillie,

On behalf of Friends of the Mississippi River, thank you for the work you and your committee have done in putting together the Legacy Budget Omnibus Bill (HF4124 DE2). We are particularly grateful to see that Article 2 (supplemental Clean Water Fund appropriations) includes the Clean Water Council's recommended funding levels, and does not include new funding line items.

As you know, the Clean Water Council works hard to prepare Clean Water Fund recommendations for the governor and legislature that best advance our shared clean water goals. The Council's process has produced supplemental recommendations that we strongly support, including:

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): Nitrate in Groundwater (\$1.0 million) and the AgBMP Loan Program (\$3.402 million).
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment (\$326,000), Enhanced County Inspection/SSTS Corrective Actions (\$2.0 million), Chloride Reduction Grants (\$1.0 million) and the Continuous Nitrate Sensor Network (\$2.0 million).
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Fish Contamination Assessment (\$90,000).
- Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR): Great Lakes Restoration Initiative LAMP match (\$1.0 million), Critical Shoreland Protection Easements (\$4.0 million), Working Land and Floodplain Easements (\$4.434 million) and the Clean Water Partners Legacy small grants (\$2.0 million).
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Drinking Water Contaminants of Emerging Concern (\$384,000) and the Southeast Minnesota Nitrate Response (\$2.79 million).
- The University of Minnesota: Stormwater BMP Performance Evaluation & Technology Transfer (\$1.0 million).

We look forward to working with you throughout the session to develop a final Legacy Budget Omnibus Bill that reflects the Council's recommendations.

Sincerely,

Trevor Russell

Water Program Director
Friends of the Mississippi River

April 16, 2024

Chairman Representative Leon Lillie
365 State Office Building
100 Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Lillie:

As the spokesperson for the Metropolitan Area Regional Parks and Trails Implementing Agencies during the 2024 legislative session, I'm writing to communicate our collective support for HF4124.

As our agencies work to implement the 25-year long-range parks and trails legacy plan, these funds are essential to support the four pillars of the parks and trails legacy fund which include:

- 1 Restoring, protecting, and enhancing Minnesota wildlife populations.
- 2) Restoring and protecting clean water.
- 3) Supporting parks and trails.
- 4) Preserving Minnesota's history and cultural heritage through arts and cultural programs.

The Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System was established by the legislature in 1974, to preserve and protect the last great places for outdoor recreation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The funding provided through the parks and trails legacy fund helps to ensure that these spaces will be well maintained and accessible for generations of Minnesotans now and into the future.

We thank you for past support of the Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark McCabe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "McCabe" clearly distinguishable.

Mark McCabe
2024 Legislative Spokesperson
Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails Agencies
P: 651.266.003 | mark.mccabe@co.ramsey.mn.us



April 16, 2024

Rep. Leon Lillie
365 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Lillie and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association's (MCGA) nearly 7,000 members I appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on the DE-2 for HF 4124.

We want to thank Chair Lillie for the inclusions of the Clean Water Council's funding request that will help state agencies implement the workplan that has been developed in response to the EPA petition related to nitrates in groundwater in southeast Minnesota. We also would like to thank the Council for being responsive to the petition and for putting these recommendations forward. MCGA is committed to addressing nitrogen challenges in southeast Minnesota and other vulnerable groundwater areas through partnerships, research, policy and best management practice adoption.

MCGA strongly supports the following recommendations:

- \$1,000,000 to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to accelerate the implementation of the nitrogen fertilizer management plan with a focus on southeast Minnesota.
- \$3,402,000 to MDA for the Agriculture Best Management Practices Loan Program.
- \$2,790,000 to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for southeast Minnesota response for well testing and inventory.
- \$2,000,000 for the Pollution Control Agency's Continuous Nitrate Sensor Network.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written comments. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to MCGA's Senior Public Policy Director Amanda Bilek at abilek@mncorn.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Allen-Tully".

Dana Allen-Tully
President
Minnesota Corn Growers Association



April 16, 2024

Representative Leon Lillie
Chair, Legacy Finance Committee
365 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Lillie and Members of the Legacy Committee:

The Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition – which brings together nearly two dozen community, youth and education organizations – writes in strong support of the Omnibus Legacy Finance Bill (HF4124) and the funding it provides for Underrepresented Groups Cultural and Ethnic Studies.

Unlike other content areas such as Math, Literacy and Science, Cultural and Ethnic Studies curriculum and materials cannot be purchased from a curriculum and textbook service provider. HF4124 would allocate \$250,000 in fiscal year 2025 from the arts and cultural heritage fund to support the development of high-quality academic cultural and ethnic studies materials for communities that do not have adequate materials or who are underrepresented. This appropriation will directly support the development of materials that are co-constructed from the shared knowledge of educators, community experts, students and families.

As Minnesota schools become increasingly diverse, the need for culturally responsive and reflective curriculum is only more relevant. Studies show that when students see their own experiences and backgrounds within their curriculum, they become more engaged in learning, have a greater sense of belonging, and achieve better educational outcomes. HF4124 will invest in curricular resources to better meet the educational needs of all Minnesota students.

Thank you to Chair Lillie for inclusion of these funds in the Legacy Finance bill, and to Representative Sencer-Mura for recognizing this critical need and authoring the original legislation.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition

Members of the Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition

Asian American
Organizing Project



CAAL



Climate Generation



Coalition to Increase
Teachers of Color and
American Indian
Teachers in MN



Education for
Liberation Minnesota



Education Evolving



Education Minnesota



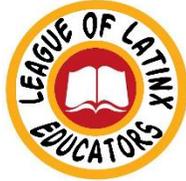
Ed Allies



ISAIAH



League of Latinx
Educators



Minneapolis
Federation of Teachers
59



Minnesota Educators
Against ICE



Minnesota Zej Zog (MN
Zej Zog / MZZ)



Saint Paul Promise
Neighborhood



Unidos MN



Voices for Racial
Justice



Youth 4 Ethnic Studies



YoUthROC





TO: House Legacy Finance Committee Members
FROM: Dave Osborne, MN-FISH Coalition
DATE: April 17, 2024
RE: Support Funding to Protect Minnesota's Aquatic Habitat from Invasive Carp

On behalf of the MN-FISH Coalition, I am writing to offer our strong support for the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council funding recommendations, which include a recommendation to set aside funds for protecting the Upper Mississippi from invasive carp by beginning the process of partnering with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers to construct a barrier.

Minnesota's outdoor recreational community and industry are at serious risk if invasive carp continue to move upriver and spawn.

MN-FISH has been actively working and meeting with the DNR over the last year, and a representative of the organization served on the DNR's Strategic Decision-making Working Group whose work was the basis for the updated Carp Management plan issued by the DNR earlier this year. On February 23, 2024, at a DNR Invasive Carp meeting with Commissioner Strommen and her team, our MN-Fish team presented a new collaborative approach to an Invasive Carp barrier at Lock and Dam 5 and best-practices from the invasive carp barrier implemented in Kentucky at Barclay Dam in 2019.

Research has shown that carp movement upstream is slow enough that it might be reduced to near zero (two percent) using a multi-component approach, including the construction of a barrier, continued commercial fishing by the DNR, and other means. A carp deterrent would be added to the lock, ongoing carp removal would be enhanced at this location, and engineers would examine whether and how to adjust spillway gate openings to allow even fewer carp to pass—while native fish passage would be facilitated using a native fish elevator.

This plan is supported by the scientific community. Key elements have been published in four peer-reviewed scientific publications and assessed by Barr Engineering Company, which also found it reasonable and doable. Four stakeholder meetings conducted by Barr have also been supportive.

Analyses suggest that adult invasive carp will be past lock and Dam 5 in just few short years and breeding in Lake Pepin—and then the St. Croix River—if no action is taken. There is just enough time to stop them if we act now. A plan exists that is capable of arresting would be the worst environmental disaster to strike Minnesota’s waters since the zebra mussel.

We have appreciated working with Commissioner Strommen and her staff in finding solutions for Minnesota to respond to this environmental disaster. MN-FISH will be in support of the DNR’s Invasive Carp Action Plan over the next ten years for prevention and management efforts in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Dave Osborne
President, MN-FISH Sportfishing Coalition



305 Roselawn Ave E | Suite 200 | St. Paul, MN 55117
Phone: (651) 639-1223 | www.mfu.org

April 16, 2024

Chair Leon Lillie
House Legacy Finance Committee
365 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Lillie and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our support for the Clean Water Council's supplemental funding recommendations and to thank you for largely maintaining them in your Legacy Finance Omnibus (HF4124 DE). Your bill will ensure Minnesotans have access to clean drinking water and help farmers accelerate adoption of practices that promote water quality.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. We were proud to help the Clean Water Council shape their supplemental funding recommendations through our representative on the Council and were glad to see them unanimously approve these recommendations in March.

In particular, we want to highlight our support for provisions that address nitrates in groundwater in the karst region of Southeast Minnesota. These include:

- **Nitrate response at the Department of Agriculture (MDA)**, which will help accelerate progress in implementing the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan in Southeast Minnesota.
- **Nitrate response at the Department of Health (MDH)**, which will improve local capacity to respond to this challenge and ensure that everyone has clean drinking water quickly.
- **The AgBMP Loan program (MDA)**, which helps farmers purchase the equipment needed to implement new soil health practices like cover cropping, no till, and precision agriculture, helping to promote water quality over the long-term.

Overall, we believe this is a balanced proposal that will address the timely challenges and accelerates on-the-ground action to promote water quality. Thank you for your support and for your work to carry the Clean Water Council recommendations through conference. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota's farm families.

Sincerely,

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union

April 16, 2024

Chair Leon Lillie
Minnesota House Legacy Finance Committee
365 State Office Building
St Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for HF4124 DE 2, Clean Water Fund Appropriations

Chair Lillie and committee members,

The organizations listed below support the provisions in HF4124 DE2 that closely align with the Clean Water Council's March 18 recommendations for supplemental funding from the Clean Water Fund.

The work of the Clean Water Council is a top priority for us. We follow the deliberations of this group carefully, and we know firsthand the depth and thoughtfulness of the discussions and the careful consideration Council members have given to the items recommended for supplemental funding. We appreciate the House Legacy Finance Committee supporting these recommendations.

Thank you for helping to protect Minnesota waters by spending this money thoughtfully with return on investment as a top priority – and we look forward to working with you throughout the Conference Committee process.

FRESHWATER

The Nature Conservancy 



Minnesota Environmental Partnership

