

April 9, 2025

Co-Chair Peter Fischer
Environment and Natural Resources Finance and
Policy
658 Cedar Street
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Co-Chair Josh Heintzeman
Environment and Natural Resources Finance and
Policy
658 Cedar Street
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Fischer and Heintzeman:

I would like to express my appreciation for the thoughtful work that has gone into developing the Environment & Natural Resources omnibus bill, HF 2439.

In particular, I would like to thank you and the members of the committee for funding the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) base budget, which represents ongoing core work to protect the environment and human health including issuing permits, monitoring for pollution, and cleaning up contamination. I also appreciate the committee's judicious approach to distributing funding cuts. In recognition of the difficult budget forecast facing the committee and the state, I hope we can continue conversations on how and where to cut funds while maintaining support for core services and shared priorities.

The Governor's revised budget recommendations fund important and necessary work at the MPCA. In particular, and of highest priority, the MPCA operating adjustment is needed to cover the cost to maintain current service levels. As we work together on new ideas like adding additional engagement with Tribal Nations or reforming our permitting process to move more quickly, it is critical for the agency to first secure adequate funding for our core work. I look forward to continued conversations with both of you, and with your colleagues, about a mix of funding and policy proposals that accomplish our shared goals and meet the expectations of Minnesotans.

This year's legislative session has presented unique challenges and opportunities to work collaboratively on shared goals. I am grateful to members and staff alike for engaging with the administration in a productive and collegial process and I look forward to continuing that work in the final weeks of session.

Sincerely,

Katrina Kessler

This document has been electronically signed.

Katrina Kessler, P.E.
Commissioner

April 9, 2025

Co-Chair Josh Heintzeman
House Environment and Natural Resources
Finance and Policy
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Co-Chair Peter Fischer
House Environment and Natural Resources
Finance and Policy
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Heintzeman and Fischer:

On behalf of the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House File 2439, the Environment & Natural Resources omnibus bill. BWSR works in partnership with federal, state, Tribal, local governments, and with landowners to achieve its mission to improve and protect Minnesota's water and soil resources. We appreciate the committee's difficult task of budgeting for the state's environmental priorities over the next biennium, as reflected in the omnibus bill.

Minnesotans value their natural resources and care about clean water, climate impacts, and productive use of their land and infrastructure. We have appreciated the opportunities this session to share BWSR's work and outcomes with you all.

The House Environment & Natural Resources omnibus bill will require BWSR to reduce its statewide work with local governments and landowners. While BWSR's operational costs have increased over the last biennium, we know that no additional agency appropriation means our output will necessarily decrease. We will do our best to achieve our agency's mission and goals – as well as statutory obligations – knowing that we will be constrained. We also note that the removal of appropriated funds for grassland easements will diminish the leverage of Federal funding via a new CREP agreement and reduce conservation efforts for wetland restoration and water quality improvements.

We look forward to working with House members on this important legislation in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,



John Jaschke
Executive Director
Board of Water and Soil Resources



April 9, 2025

Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer, and members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to thank you for including funding for regional parks and trails operations and maintenance funding in the delete-everything amendment for [HF 2439](#) (Heintzeman/Fischer).

Regional parks and trails operations and maintenance funding is critical for the regional parks and trails system in the metropolitan area. The delete-everything amendment includes Governor Walz's budget recommendations of \$2.54 million in general fund and \$8.95 million from the natural resources fund (lottery-in-lieu) in each of the next two fiscal years (FY26 and FY27) to the Metropolitan Council for regional parks operations and maintenance. State funds to operate and maintain regional parks are an investment in the people who call this region home. Every dollar allocated to the Met Council for this program is passed through to the 10 regional park implementing agencies.

The regional system is comprised of 46 regional parks, 12 park reserves, eight special recreation features, and nearly 500 miles of regional trails. These high-quality spaces connect people to the outdoors, build health, and support assets that drive our economy. Operations and maintenance funding from the state is used for many critical activities in regional parks, including:

- Facility maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation
- Trail maintenance and upkeep
- Forestry and groundskeeping (mowing, tree trimming, native plant restoration, and invasive species control)
- Staff salaries and overhead expenses (facilities, natural resources, and programming)

Again, we appreciate inclusion of parks and trails operations and maintenance funding in your bill. Please reach out to me or Judd Schetnan (judd.schetnan@metc.state.mn.us) with any questions or comments. We are available to meet at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles A. Zelle".

Charles A. Zelle
Chair

Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System

Operations and Maintenance Funding

Dear Honorable Legislators:

On behalf of the 10 implementing agencies that make up the Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System, **we are writing to request your support for SF2114 | HF1564** which includes \$11.05 million in general fund and \$8.95 million from the natural resources fund (lottery-in-lieu) in FY26 and \$21.5 million in general fund and \$8.95 million from the natural resources fund (lottery-in-lieu) in FY27 **for operations and maintenance for Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails.**

Since 1998, state funding has averaged 9% of operation and maintenance costs annually, while state law calls for no less than 40%. With a 9% annual state funding level, this expense falls disproportionately on local taxpayers. The requested approach gradually increases funding to the state commitment of 40% by 2030.

The structure, visitation, and funding of the regional parks and trails makes this a system of regional and statewide significance. The Metropolitan Regional Parks 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. Because 93% of state parks and recreation areas are located outside of the Twin Cities, the regional parks function as the state parks of the Metro Area by providing comparable natural settings and recreational opportunities.

Our visitation is also far greater than that of the state park system. More than 69 million visits were made to the system in 2023, and the number continues to grow annually. The need for investment has never been greater, as our parks and trails are being “loved to death.”

With 46 regional parks, 12 park reserves, 8 special recreation features, and over 500 miles of regional trails, it takes more than \$133 million each year to keep the whole system in good order. Funding covers the costs of facility maintenance, repair and restoration, trail maintenance and upkeep and forestry and groundskeeping. When the state funds operations and maintenance for metropolitan regional parks and trails, it’s investing in the people who call this region home – creating high-quality spaces to connect in the outdoors, places that build health, and assets that drive our economy.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System

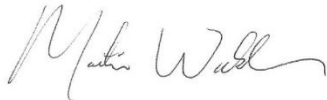
Jeff Perry
Parks Director
Anoka County



Ann Kattreh
Parks and Recreation Director
City of Bloomington



Martin Walsh
Parks and Recreation Director
Carver County



Niki Geisler
Director of Parks
Dakota County



Al Bangoura
Superintendent
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board



Mark McCabe
Director of Parks and Recreation
Ramsey County



Andy Rodriguez
Parks and Recreation Director
City of Saint Paul



C. Michael-jon Pease
Executive Director
Saint Paul Parks Conservancy



Patricia Freeman
General Manager of Parks and Trails
Scott County



Boe Carlson
Superintendent
Three Rivers Park District



Alex McKinney
Parks Director
Washington County



Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System

FY 2026-2027 operations and maintenance funding

The Metropolitan Council requests continuing the base funding of **\$2.54 million** in general fund and **\$8.95 million** from the natural resources fund (lottery-in-lieu) in each of the next two fiscal years (FY26 and FY27) to the Metropolitan Council for regional parks operations and maintenance.

State funds to operate and maintain regional parks are an investment in the people who call this region home. Every dollar allocated to the Met Council for this program is passed through to the 10 regional park implementing agencies. It takes \$133 million each year to keep the system in good order. That's 46 regional parks, 12 park reserves, eight special recreation features, and nearly 500 miles of regional trails.

These high-quality spaces connect people to the outdoors, build health, and support assets that drive our economy.

- Facility maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation
- Trail maintenance and upkeep
- Forestry and groundskeeping (mowing, tree trimming, native plant restoration, invasive species control)
- Staff salaries and overhead expenses (facilities, natural resources, and programming)



Connecting
people to nature,
developing a
sense of
belonging

Minnesota law requires the Met Council to distribute the funding for operations and maintenance to regional parks and open spaces. Each year, the implementing agencies report their expenditures from the previous calendar year. The Met Council reviews the submittals and applies the formula found in law, to determine the allocation:

- 40% based on use
- 40% based on the operation and maintenance expenditures made in the previous year
- 20% based on acreage

Laws governing these aspects include Minn. Stat. §473.351, subdivisions 2 and 3.



**NATURE-BASED
SYSTEM PROVIDES
SIGNIFICANT
GREENSPACE AND
WILDLIFE HABITAT**



**58 REGIONAL
PARKS AND PARK
RESERVES**



**OVER 69 MILLION
VISITS
IN 2023**



**8 SPECIAL
RECREATION
FEATURES** (LIKE COMO
PARK ZOO AND CONSERVATORY
AND GALE WOODS FARM)



**NEARLY 500 MILES
OF INTERCONNECTED
REGIONAL TRAILS**



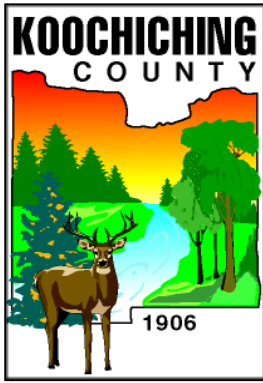
**OVER 65,000
ACRES OF
LAND PROTECTED**

For more information on the regional parks operations and maintenance funding,

Contact Judd Schetnan at judd.schetnan@metc.state.mn.us



Fostering
wellness,
building **strong**
communities



RICKY ROCHE
KOOCHICHING COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2
715 4th Street
INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MN 56649

April 9, 2025

Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Josh Heintzeman, Co-Chair
Representative Peter Fischer, Co-Chair
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer, and Committee Members:

On behalf of Koochiching County, I am writing to express our strong disappointment that appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account, outlined in HF281 and HF279, were not included in the 2025 Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources bill.

Given the broad bipartisan support for these bills and their alignment with the statutory purpose of the ATV Dedicated Account, this omission is particularly concerning to our community.

Koochiching County is committed to developing and maintaining environmentally sustainable ATV trails. Each project undergoes thorough evaluation and collaboration involving multiple stakeholders, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), the U.S. Forest Service, tribal governments, neighboring counties, local municipalities, and various community organizations. This extensive collaborative process ensures minimal environmental disturbance, respects cultural and historical resources, and enjoys broad community support.

Furthermore, the recent University of Minnesota Extension Economic Impact Study highlights the significant economic contributions made by ATV trails in Northeastern Minnesota. The study clearly demonstrates how ATV-related tourism positively impacts local economies by increasing traffic to local businesses, creating jobs, and enhancing county tax revenues. As Koochiching County continues to expand ATV trail infrastructure, we anticipate substantial economic growth, improved quality of life for residents, and strengthened local businesses.

We respectfully urge the committee to revisit this critical oversight and restore the appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account, as intended in HF281 and HF279. Consistent and predictable funding from this dedicated account is essential for the continued environmental stewardship, recreational opportunities, and economic prosperity of Koochiching County and the broader northeastern Minnesota region.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this important matter. We appreciate your continued partnership and look forward to a positive resolution.

Sincerely,

Ricky Roche

Ricky Roche
Koochiching County Commissioner

CC: Speaker Lisa Demuth
Speaker-Emerita Melissa Hortman
Leader Harry Niska
Leader Jamie Long
Rep. Cal Warwas
Rep. Pete Johnson
Rep. Roger Skraba
Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar
Rep. Spencer Igo
Rep. John Huot
Rep. Isaac Schultz
Rep. John Burkel
Rep. Dan Wolgamott
Rep. Aaron Repinski



Saint Louis County

Fourth District County Commissioner • 320 Miners Drive East • Ely, MN 55731
Phone: (218)365-8200 • Fax: (218)365-8205 • mcdonaldp@stlouiscountymn.gov

Paul McDonald

April 9, 2025

Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Josh Heintzeman, Co-Chair
Representative Peter Fischer, Co-Chair
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Northeastern Regional ATV Joint Powers Board, representing ATV interests across St. Louis, Lake, and Koochiching Counties, we wish to convey our sincere disappointment that appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account outlined in HF281 and HF279 were not included in the 2025 Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources bill.

Given the bipartisan nature of these bills—authored by Representatives Heintzeman, Skraba, Huot, Norris, Warwas, Zeleznikar, Schultz, Igo, Berkel, Repinski, Wolgamott, and Johnson—and their funding from the long-established ATV Dedicated Account, this omission is particularly troubling.

The ATV Dedicated Account, established in 1984, is specifically funded through ATV registration fees and a portion of the unrefunded gasoline tax attributed to ATV use. Minnesota Statutes section 84.927 explicitly defines the allowable uses for these funds, including ATV trail acquisition, development, maintenance, and enforcement activities. Omitting appropriations from this account hinders essential trail projects and significantly impacts trail sustainability and community recreation.

Our Joint Powers Board takes immense pride in developing environmentally sustainable ATV trails in northeastern Minnesota. Each trail project undergoes an extensive review and collaborative planning process involving the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), the U.S. Forest Service, tribal governments, county officials, local municipalities, and various community stakeholders. This comprehensive approach ensures minimal environmental impact, promotes ecological sustainability, respects cultural and historical sites, and garners strong local support.

Additionally, the recent University of Minnesota Extension Economic Impact Study highlighted the significant economic benefits of ATV trails in Northeastern Minnesota. This comprehensive study clearly demonstrated how ATV recreation substantially boosts local economies by increasing tourism, supporting small businesses, creating jobs, and enhancing tax revenues. Communities in St. Louis and Lake Counties, in particular, have experienced significant economic revitalization from

ATV riders and related tourism, and we anticipate similar positive outcomes in Koochiching County as trails expand into the region.

We respectfully urge the committee to revisit this oversight and include the appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account as originally intended in HF281 and HF279. Ensuring consistent and predictable funding from this account is vital for the continued growth, sustainability, and economic prosperity of communities throughout northeastern Minnesota.

Thank you for your immediate attention and consideration of this important matter. We look forward to your continued partnership and a favorable resolution.

Sincerely,

Paul McDonald

Paul McDonald
Chair, Northeastern Regional ATV Joint Powers Board
St. Louis County Commissioner, District 4

CC: Speaker Lisa Demuth
Speaker-Emerita Melissa Hortman
Leader Harry Niska
Leader Jamie Long
Rep. Cal Warwas
Rep. Pete Johnson
Rep. Roger Skraba
Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar
Rep. Spencer Igo
Rep. John Huot
Rep. Isaac Schultz
Rep. John Burkel
Rep. Dan Wolgamott
Rep. Aaron Repinski

Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers



April 8, 2025

Re: HF2439 House Environment and Natural Resources Funding, DE1 Amendment

Dear Chairs Heintzeman and Fischer, and Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers (MACFO), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the House Omnibus Environment Budget. MACFO represents counties with delegated authority to administer Minnesota's feedlot rule and is an affiliate of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), which represents all 87 Minnesota counties. Currently, 50 counties—including most of the state's major livestock-producing counties—operate under delegation agreements.

We are grateful that the House proposal includes continued funding for the County Feedlot Program at \$2.959 million and that this amount is established as the base moving forward. We recognize the challenges involved in crafting this budget and sincerely appreciate your commitment to supporting this important program.

This funding sustains a critical regulatory partnership between the state and delegated counties—one that plays a key role in protecting water quality. Over time, both program costs and the requirements outlined in state work plans have increased. Continued investment ensures that county staff can spend more time in the field, directly assisting producers in meeting state environmental standards.

If you have any questions regarding the County Feedlot Program, please contact Brian Martinson, AMC Policy Analyst, at 651-246-4156 or bmartinson@mncounties.org.

Sincerely,


Mark Koep, Douglas County

President, Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers



ATV Minnesota
P.O. Box 300 Stacy, MN 55079
www.atvmn.org - 1-800-442-8826
ATV Minnesota – Your Voice to RIDE



Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Josh Heintzeman, Co-Chair
Representative Peter Fischer, Co-Chair
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 9, 2025

Dear Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer, and Committee Members:

On behalf of ATV Minnesota and our thousands of ATV enthusiasts statewide, I am writing to express our sincere disappointment that appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account outlined in HF281 and HF279 were not included in the 2025 Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources bill. Given the fact that these two bills are both bipartisan – authored by Representative’s Heintzeman, Skraba, Huot, Norris, Warwas, Zeleznikar, Schultz, Igo, Berkel, Repinski, Wolgamott and Pete Johnson, and from the long-established ATV Dedicated Account, it is extremely disappointing that this committee would omit this request from the 2025 Omnibus bill.

We are also disappointed the committee did not include HF274, HF566, and HF1327 – all of which were also heard by the committee.

Specific to HF281 and HF279, the ATV Dedicated Account, established by the Minnesota Legislature in 1984, is funded specifically through ATV registration fees and a portion of the unrefunded gasoline tax attributed to ATV use. Minnesota Statutes section 84.927 clearly defines its limited use for essential activities including ATV trail acquisition, development, maintenance, and enforcement of ATV-related statutes.

The omission of funding from this dedicated account hampers crucial trail development projects and maintenance initiatives vital to sustaining Minnesota's ATV trails and riding areas. Given the limited and clearly defined parameters of this fund, we believe appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account should be both routine and consistent, reflecting the legislative intent and purpose of the fund.

Our organization prides itself on building environmentally sustainable trails. Every ATV trail project undergoes a rigorous review process involving key stakeholders such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), the U.S. Forest Service, tribal governments, counties, local municipalities, and other relevant agencies. This collaborative approach ensures minimal environmental impact, respects cultural and historic resources, and secures broad community support.



ATV Minnesota
P.O. Box 300 Stacy, MN 55079
www.atvmn.org - 1-800-442-8826
ATV Minnesota – Your Voice to RIDE



Moreover, ATV trails significantly contribute to the economic vitality of communities throughout Minnesota. Local businesses, particularly in rural areas, benefit substantially from increased visitor traffic, generating employment opportunities and supporting regional economic growth. Trail-based tourism has become a cornerstone of local economic stability, fostering sustainable development and prosperity across the state.

We respectfully request that the committee reconsider this oversight and take the necessary steps to ensure appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account are included as intended. ATV Minnesota stands ready to support the committee's efforts to sustain and improve Minnesota's ATV trails.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. We look forward to your positive response and continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Ron Potter
President, ATV Minnesota

CC: Speaker Lisa Demuth
Speaker-Emerita Melissa Hortman
Leader Harry Niska
Leader Jamie Long
Rep. Cal Warwas
Rep. Pete Johnson
Rep. Roger Skraba
Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar
Rep. Spencer Igo
Rep. John Huot
Rep. Isaac Schultz
Rep. John Burkel
Rep. Dan Wolgamott
Rep. Aaron Repinski



Board of Commissioners
Lake County Service Center
616 Third Avenue
Two Harbors, MN 55616
Phone: 218-834-8320
Website: www.co.lake.mn.us

Joe Baltich, Commissioner District 1
Derrick (Rick) L. Goutermont, Commissioner District 2
Richard (Rick) C. Hogenson, Commissioner District 3
Jeremy M. Hurd, Commissioner District 4
Rich Sve, Commissioner District 5

April 9, 2025

Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Josh Heintzeman, Co-Chair
Representative Peter Fischer, Co-Chair
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Lake County, I am writing to express our deep disappointment that appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account, outlined in HF281 and HF279, were not included in the 2025 Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources bill.

Given the broad bipartisan support for these bills—authored by Representatives Heintzeman, Skraba, Huot, Norris, Warwas, Zeleznikar, Schultz, Igo, Berkel, Repinski, Wolgamott, and Johnson—and their clear alignment with the statutory purpose of the ATV Dedicated Account, this omission is particularly concerning to our community.

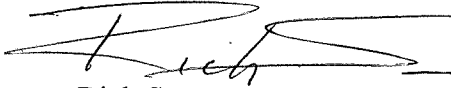
Lake County is exceptionally proud of our efforts in creating and maintaining environmentally sustainable ATV trails. Each trail development project undergoes rigorous evaluation and coordination with multiple agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), the U.S. Forest Service, tribal governments, neighboring counties, local municipalities, and community organizations. This extensive collaboration ensures minimal environmental disturbance, respects cultural and historical sites, and secures widespread local support and stewardship.

Moreover, the recent University of Minnesota Extension Economic Impact Study underscores the substantial economic benefits provided by ATV trails in Northeastern Minnesota. The study clearly indicates that ATV tourism significantly boosts local economies by generating business for local establishments, creating employment opportunities, and increasing county tax revenues. Lake County has directly experienced considerable economic growth from ATV tourism, positively impacting our communities and enhancing the quality of life for residents and businesses alike.

We respectfully urge the committee to reconsider this critical oversight and restore the appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account, as intended in HF281 and HF279. Ensuring stable and predictable funding from this account is essential for the continued environmental stewardship, recreational opportunities, and economic vitality of Lake County and the broader northeastern Minnesota region.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We value your ongoing partnership and look forward to a positive resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Sve", with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Rich Sve
Chair, Lake County Board of Commissioners

CC: Speaker Lisa Demuth
Speaker-Emerita Melissa Hortman
Leader Harry Niska
Leader Jamie Long
Rep. Cal Warwas
Rep. Pete Johnson
Rep. Roger Skraba
Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar
Rep. Spencer Igo
Rep. John Huot
Rep. Isaac Schultz
Rep. John Burkel
Rep. Dan Wolgamott
Rep. Aaron Repinski



Co-Chair Josh Heintzeman and Co-Chair Peter Fischer
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 10, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs Heintzeman and Fischer and Members of the Committee,

As the committee reviews the DE amendment to HF 2439, we write to thank you for the appropriation of \$264,000 per year in general funds for implementing the 1998 Red River Basin Flood Mediation agreement.

This funding will provide the support needed for local watershed district project teams as they develop multipurpose flood mitigation and water storage projects. The Mediation Agreement provides a structure for engaging partners on water, habitat, and natural resource issues on a basin-wide approach as watershed projects are developed from the concept phase. These local projects provide water quality, water storage, and habitat benefits, all while supporting the communities and economies in the Red River Basin.

The Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, who implements the Mediation Agreement with the Red River Watershed Management Board, has successfully implemented the Agreement for over 26 years. This funding will help us continue this important work for the next two years. Thank you again for supporting this vital program in the Red River Basin.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Sip
Executive Director
RRWMB

Sincerely,

Dan Money
Co-chair
FDRWG

Sincerely,

John Finney
President
RRWMB

Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Josh Heintzeman, Co-Chair
Representative Peter Fischer, Co-Chair
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 9, 2025

Dear Chair Heintzeman, Chair Fischer, and Committee Members:

On behalf of Carlton County, I am writing to express our significant disappointment that appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account, outlined in HF281 and HF279, were not included in the 2025 Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources bill.

Given the strong bipartisan support for these bills and their clear alignment with the statutory intent of the ATV Dedicated Account, this omission is particularly troubling for Carlton County, as we are actively working to develop and expand our ATV trail system.

Carlton County is deeply committed to creating environmentally sustainable ATV trails. Our ongoing and planned projects involve comprehensive review and extensive collaboration with stakeholders such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), the U.S. Forest Service, tribal governments, neighboring counties, municipalities, and local community groups. This careful and inclusive planning approach ensures minimal environmental impacts, preserves cultural and historical resources, and fosters strong community support.

The recent University of Minnesota Extension Economic Impact Study underscores the significant economic benefits ATV trails bring to Northeastern Minnesota, showing how ATV tourism substantially boosts local economies, supports local businesses, creates employment opportunities, and enhances tax revenues. Carlton County sees substantial potential for economic growth through expanded ATV tourism, which will directly benefit our local businesses and communities.

Therefore, we respectfully request that the committee reconsider this oversight and restore appropriations from the ATV Dedicated Account as proposed in HF281 and HF279. Immediate and sustained funding from this dedicated account is crucial for Carlton County to continue our efforts in trail expansion, environmental stewardship, and economic growth.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We greatly value your continued support and partnership and look forward to a positive resolution.

Sincerely,

Ryan Pervenanze,

Economic Development Director



CC: Speaker Lisa Demuth
Speaker-Emerita Melissa Hortman
Leader Harry Niska
Leader Jamie Long
Rep. Cal Warwas
Rep. Pete Johnson
Rep. Roger Skraba
Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar
Rep. Spencer Igo
Rep. John Huot
Rep. Isaac Schultz
Rep. John Burkel
Rep. Dan Wolgamott
Rep. Aaron Repinski



April 9, 2025

Co-Chair Josh Heintzeman
Co-Chair Peter Fischer
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Capitol G3
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chair Heintzeman, Co-Chair Fischer and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Complex Product Manufacturers Coalition (CPMC), we would like to voice our concern that the DE to HF 2439 does not address the recommendations provided to the Committee on February 11th from the 2025 MPCA Report on PFAS and Lead/Cadmium laws implementation. The DE does not reflect any adjustments to PFAS laws to address challenges faced by complex products manufacturers as addressed in various bills introduced this session. **We kindly request consideration to exempt internal components that do not come in direct contact with a person's skin or mouth during reasonable use.**

The Complex Product Manufacturers Coalition (CPMC) is a multi-stakeholder group dedicated to driving positive change in policymaking for sensible PFAS management. CMPC actively engages with policymakers to promote sustainable, science-based solutions. CMPC advocates for policies that protect human health and the environment while supporting the jobs and products that are essential to our society's well-being.

CPMC members assemble up to thousands of parts, components, and raw materials to manufacture products that are frequently referred to as "complex products" or "complex durable goods." These include industrial, commercial, and consumer products such as appliances, batteries, communication devices, electrical and power transmission and distribution equipment, electronics, HVACR-WH systems, lighting, outdoor power equipment, vehicles, and vessels, as well as their components and replacement parts. Complex products are used to support nearly every major sector in the nation, providing critical and often life-saving services upon which our modern society depends.

In most cases, complex products incorporate PFAS in internal components that are essential to the product's ability to function properly and are often part of an internal part. Being encased in the product interior means that any components that may include PFAS in their design are not accessible to consumers and therefore have little to no risk of exposure. Furthermore, products are bound by stringent safety and environmental protocols. Lastly, complex goods have well-established recycling frameworks, thus reducing the risk of exposure at end-of-life.

In the last 70 years, the PFAS family has grown to over 12,000 unique chemicals that have become an integral component of many critical products on which society relies. Because PFAS have been so successful in the services they provide, over the decades there has been little development of feasible alternatives. For most complex products, there are few if any known substitutes.

Finding and implementing chemical alternatives presents challenges to the regulated community, a problem that is magnified for complex products which typically have up to thousands of components.

Complex products must meet strict, uniform design standards due to performance, safety, and other considerations. Even simple chemical substitutions can take years and cost millions of dollars. The chemical substitution process requires identifying chemicals throughout shifting global supply chains (PFAS levels at less than 0.1% by weight of the final product, are usually untraceable in the supply chain), finding an alternative (if one is available), and initiating the lengthy and resource-intensive process of product redesign, which must ultimately ensure these products still meet existing regulations, safety requirements, and consumer expectations.

Due to the complexities of multi-tiered international supply chains, lengthy product development lead times, difficulties in finding suitable alternatives, and other complexities, manufacturers of complex durable goods are burdened by chemical bans beyond most of the regulated community. It is important that policymakers acknowledge this unique segment of industry and the challenges they face.

For the reasons outlined above, CMPC encourages members to include provisions to exempt internal components that will not come into contact with humans during future discussions. Should you have any question or would like to discuss the positive impact of these provisions further, please contact Stacy Tatman at statman@wiley.law or 202-875-4352.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy Tatman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Stacy Tatman
Executive Director
Complex Product Manufacturers Coalition



DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

April 9, 2025

Co-Chair Fischer, Co-Chair Heintzeman and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

I am writing on behalf of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC), an organization of more than 115 cities located outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area, to comment on a variety of aspects of the Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance bill, H.F. 2439.

Funding Priorities

We recognize that in these difficult times, not all priorities can be funded. We appreciate this committee's continuing support for several items that impact our members:

- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Municipal Liaison who assists municipalities with water quality issues and serves an important liaison role with the agency.
- Funding for adaptation grants through the MPCA.
- Funding for emerging issues including the PFAS Blueprint.
- Funding for the local parks and trails grants under Minn. Stat. 85.019.

Policy Issues.

We recognize that there are very policy proposals that the committee has come to agreement on, but we think there is at least one proposal that could be added into the bill that would benefit members of both parties. Specifically, we urge the Committee to consider adding in Section 1 of H.F. 1208, a permitting reform bill.

The language in Section 1 provides permit reform while balancing the concerns of cities of different sizes throughout the state. Section 1 updates the timing for wastewater permits (more formally known as national pollutant discharge elimination system, or NPDES) permits that reflect the concerns of both large and small communities by doing the following:

- It allows a wastewater permit applicant to waive the requirement that it receives a draft copy of the permit and any supporting fact sheets if it so chooses. (Lines 1.10 – 1.22)
- It allows the commissioner of the MPCA to reduce the comment period for a wastewater permit if requested by the applicant AND after the commissioner has considered the impact on the public or tribal interest. (Lines 2.5 – 2.8)

This approach would allow more sophisticated facilities that do not require additional notice and time to move forward with their wastewater period expeditiously while protecting the smaller facilities that may not have the resources to act and respond as quickly. We believe such an approach is protective of Minnesota's waters as well as the communities who seek to safeguard those waters. We urge this committee to include these changes from Section 1 in your omnibus bill.

We will also point out the original legislation was carried by Co-Chair Fischer, but the benefits of this legislation will inure to districts in Greater Minnesota represented by members of both parties. Adding this language in could truly be a bipartisan win for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Wefel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Wefel
Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities



Chairs Heintzeman and Fischer, and Members of the House Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the DE amendment to HF 2439, the House Environment budget bill. While this is a bare-bones budget that was constrained by challenging House budget targets, MCEA supports this bill because it makes needed investments in state environmental enforcement at a time when the federal government is shrinking from its responsibility to protect clean air and water.

Particularly, Article 1 of HF 2439 DE contains needed appropriations to support hazardous air pollution enforcement (lines 2.30 - 3.2, lines 4.30 - 5.5) at a time when the federal government is offering exemptions from air pollution laws to industry. It appropriates resources including \$3 million (lines 3.17 - 3.29) to continue biomonitoring for PFAS “forever chemicals” in east metro communities affected by water pollution and \$4 million (lines 4.15 - 4.19) to implement Minnesota’s PFAS Blueprint, at a time when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is reported to be considering changes to chemical risk evaluations from these pollutants. Appropriations to continue Minnesota’s work on environmental justice are critical (lines 6.4 - 6.12), at a time when the federal government has literally banned the words “environmental justice” and eliminated offices across the country that focused on reducing pollution in overburdened communities. Appropriations to continue Minnesota communities’ work on climate adaptation (lines 4.11 - 4.14) are desperately needed as the federal government continues attempts to erase all efforts to address the climate crisis.

In short, the appropriations in HF 2439 DE are a necessary antidote to the efforts of the federal government’s abdication of its responsibility to protect clean air, clean water, and healthy communities.

None of them are sufficient, however. The onslaught of erasing critical federal environmental standards, gutting and removing union protections from the federal workforce, and eliminating federal enforcement of environmental protections has left Minnesota on its own. **It has never been more important to defend Minnesota’s environmental standards and the enforcement of these standards.** MCEA wants to be clear: we oppose any effort to weaken Minnesota’s environmental standards or limit enforcement of Minnesota’s laws and rules that protect residents from pollution. We’re pleased to see that HF 2439 DE doesn’t do that.

As the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee continues its work, we’d like to see common-sense environmental reforms, such as the 100% electronic waste collection bill, be fully considered by this committee. And while money is tight this budget cycle, we hope this committee will be able to find resources to support popular habitat programs such as Lawns to Legumes. Thank you for your work and service to Minnesota and its people.

Sincerely,

Aaron Klemz

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April 9, 2025

Co-Chair Fischer, Co-Chair Heintzeman, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to share our opposition to cutting \$3 million from the Resilient Community Assistance Program at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The provision is in lines 34.31 - 35.17 in the DE1 amendment to House File 2439.

This program is focused on supporting local and Tribal governments in planning and implementing climate resiliency and water infrastructure improvements that will help their communities prepare for a changing climate.

This planning remains a real need. These investments have already made tangible improvements in the lives of Minnesotans. And the demand for these grants is growing.

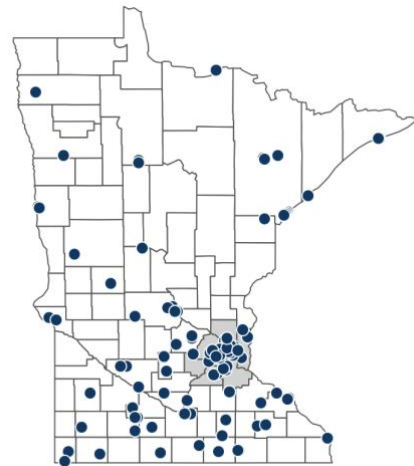
Since 2022, this program has awarded dozens of grants to local governments across the state.

They've been used to make roads safer, property more secure, and energy systems more efficient. For example, communities across the state have received grants for stormwater system improvements:

- Marshall, MN was awarded \$867,894
- Big Stone County was awarded \$118,140
- Albert Lea, MN was awarded \$885,724 for

Many more secured awards for stormwater planning:

- Renville, MN received \$71,436
- Aurora, MN got \$115,936
- Owatonna, MN was awarded \$88,380
- Belgrade, MN got \$32,359



These changes are making future extreme weather impacts more manageable and less expensive for everyone.

Please restore this funding for this in-demand program that supports communities statewide.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Aurora Vautrin

Aurora Vautrin

Legislative Director of 100%

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Representative Josh Heintzeman
House Environment and Natural Resources
Policy and Finance Committee
Centennial Office Building, Second Floor
658 Cedar Street
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Representative Peter Fischer
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Centennial Office Building, Fifth Floor
658 Cedar Street
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Re: HF2439, Environment and Natural Resources Budget Bill

April 9, 2025

Co-Chairs Heintzeman and Fischer, and members of the Committee,

As the committee reviews the HF2439 (DE1) budget bill, we write to share our considerations about how proposals in the bill impact people and nature and affect the state's ability to address the challenges facing Minnesota's climate and biodiversity.

We are glad to see the bill continues to make available unused funds from the 2023 drought-killed tree seedlings appropriation to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and hope those funds can be re-routed toward many ongoing unmet forestry needs including reforestation, forest stand improvement, and response to and management of forest pests on state forest lands. The minimum investment to keep up with reforestation alone is \$8 million/biennium. Between capital investments and general fund investments, we encourage the legislature to comprehensively ensure \$10 million is available for reforestation and \$8 million in forest stand improvement to stay atop of needs and challenges facing state forests.

We also appreciate the inclusion in the bill of an appropriation for grants supporting the Red River Mediation Agreement, which helps continue a proven concept used by watershed districts in the Red River Basin demonstrating results for flood reduction and water quality benefits. Multi-purpose water storage projects are a critical approach to meeting water quality while reducing flood impacts to communities and individuals.

We find it unfortunate that reductions are included to scale back appropriations made in the 2023 session, and which we supported, for Resilient Communities grants at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Enhanced Grasslands and Restoring Wetlands on Wildlife Management Areas for Climate and Carbon at the DNR, and Climate Private Lands/Working Lands Restoration Easements at the Board of Water and Soil Resources. We understand the challenging budget situation that warranted making these reductions, and we hope the reductions are not a reflection of perceived merits of the programs or due to a lack of urgency to meet the needs these programs address.

Additional items we would like to raise attention to that were not included in the bill are proposed DNR fee increases for groundwater permitting and state park permits. DNR has faced significant unmet needs related to some of the highest visibility uses of DNR facilities.

Failing to address these areas of need inhibits the DNR to address other worthy natural resources needs, and raising fees will help to alleviate the backlogs in these two areas and allow DNR to focus on growing challenges facing nature.

We recognize the challenging situation the committee faces this biennium to balance the budget and appreciate your consideration as to how to best steward funding toward pressing issues facing Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota



Angelica Day
Government Relations Specialist
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota