



**CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA**

March 13, 2025

RE: HF 253 (Schultz) Public water inventory temporary modifications prohibited

Chair Heintzeman and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns about HF 253 (Schultz). We think the Public Waters Inventory mapping needs to be completed sooner and not delayed.

Most Minnesotans expect the state to preserve and protect our shared water resources. Lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and other water resources designated as public waters are held in trust by the state for the benefit of all Minnesotans.

Public waters are one of the great equalizers in a society where the differences between the haves and the have nots is continuing to grow. Lakes, rivers, streams or wetlands designated as a public water cannot be owned as private property, rather they are essentially owned by and can be enjoyed by all Minnesotans.

Close to 100 years ago, Minnesota state regulators began protecting public waters from harmful alteration or pollution. Decades ago the Minnesota DNR began the process of mapping these designated public waters so that instead of using the narrative criteria to determine whether a waterbody is a public water, Minnesotans could use a map to look it up.

For reasons perhaps lost to time, the Minnesota DNR was not able to complete a full mapping of public waters in the state. The 2024 Minnesota legislature directed the DNR to complete 100% of the public waters inventory mapping, and designated \$8M to complete the job.

We know the public has been asking for completed maps for decades, so why this bill seeks to put a temporary moratorium on finishing the public water inventory mapping is difficult to understand. If anything, we think the public wants the mapping completed sooner and we would be happy to work with the bill author in figuring out how to deliver such an outcome.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts with you today.

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