

MEMORANDUM



DATE: July 1, 2023
TO: Minnesota Watersheds Members
FROM: Linda Vavra and Jamie Beyer, Resolutions Committee Co-Chairs
RE: **2023 REQUEST FOR MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS RESOLUTIONS**

It is that time of year for Minnesota Watersheds members to submit their policy recommendations through our resolutions process. This is YOUR organization and policy statements start with YOU! Here are the next steps and timeline:

- July / August** Members write, discuss, and approve resolutions at your WD/WMO meetings. The more detail you can provide, the easier it will be for the committee to make a recommendation.
- September 1** Administrators submit resolutions and background information documents to Jan Voit, Executive Director at jvoit@mnwatersheds.com by **September 1**. If more time is needed, please contact her so the Resolutions Committee is aware that another resolution may be submitted. The latest possible date to submit a resolution is **60 days before** the annual meeting (October 1). We ask that resolutions be submitted according to the described timeframe to ensure distribution to members for discussion by your boards in November.
NOTE: If all the requested information is not included, the Resolution will NOT be accepted.
- September / October** The Resolutions Committee will review the resolutions, gather more information, or ask for further clarification when deemed necessary; work with the submitting watersheds to combine similar resolutions; reject resolutions already active; discuss and make recommendations to the membership on the passage of resolutions.
- October 31** Resolutions (with committee feedback) will be emailed to each organization by **October 31**.
NOTE: If possible, please hold a regional meeting to discuss the Resolutions BEFORE the annual conference.
- November** Members should discuss the resolutions at their November meetings and decide who will be voting on their behalf at the annual meeting (2 voting members and 1 alternate are to be designated per watershed organization)
- December 3** Delegates discuss and vote on resolutions at the annual resolutions hearing. Please be prepared to present and defend your resolution.
- December / January** The Legislative Committee will review existing and new resolutions and make a recommendation to the Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors for the 2024 legislative platform.
- January 2024** Minnesota Watersheds Board of Directors will finalize the 2024 legislative platform.
- February 12, 2024** First day of the 2nd half of 93rd legislative biennium.

NOTE: Resolutions passed by the membership will remain Minnesota Watersheds policy for five years after which they will sunset. If a member wishes to keep the resolution active, it must be resubmitted and passed again by the membership. Enclosed with this memorandum are the active resolutions and those that will sunset on 12/31/23. If you have questions, Please feel free to contact co-chairs at lvavra@fedtel.net or 320-760-1774, bds wd@runestone.net or 701-866-2725, or our Executive Director at jvoit@mnwatersheds.com or 507-822-0921.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN OUR POLICY DEVELOPMENT!

Background Information

2023 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution

Proposing Watershed: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Resolution Title: _____

Background that led to the submission of this resolution:

Describe the problem you wish to solve and provide enough background information to understand the factors that led to the issue. Attach statutory or regulatory documents that may be helpful.

Ideas for how this issue could be solved:

Describe potential solutions for the problem. Provide references to statutes or rules if applicable.

Efforts to solve the problem:

Document the efforts you have taken to try to solve the issue. For example: have you spoken to state agency staff, legislators, county commissioners, etc.? If so, what was their response?

Anticipated support or opposition:

Who would be willing to partner with our watershed or state association on the issue? Who may be opposed to our efforts? (Ex. other local units of government, special interest groups, political parties, etc.)?

This issue: (check all that apply)

_____ Applies only to our district

_____ Applies only to 1 or 2 regions

_____ Applies to the entire state

_____ Requires legislative action

_____ Requires state agency advocacy

_____ Impacts Minnesota Watersheds bylaws or MOPP

(MOPP = Manual of Policies and Procedures)

Active Minnesota Watersheds Resolutions

December 2, 2022



FINANCE

2021-01A: Support SWCD Capacity Fund Sources

Minnesota Watersheds supports SWCD capacity funds to come from county and state general funds.

2021-01B: Support Clean Water Funds for Implementation, Not Capacity

Minnesota Watersheds supports Clean Water Funds being used for implementation and not for capacity.

2021-02: Support Capacity Funding for Watershed Districts

Minnesota Watersheds supports capacity base funding resources directed to non-metro watershed district who request this assistance, to implement the activities as outlined in approved watershed district watershed management plans or comprehensive watershed management plans.

2019-08: Heron Lake Watershed District General Operating Levy Adjustment

Minnesota Watersheds supports an increase in Heron Lake Watershed District's general operating levy cap from \$250,000 to an amount not to exceed \$500,000.

2019-09: Shell Rock River Watershed District General Operating Levy Adjustment

Minnesota Watersheds supports an increase in Shell Rock River Watershed District's general operating levy cap from \$250,000 to an amount not to exceed \$500,000.

2019-10: Pelican River Watershed District General Operating Levy Adjustment

Minnesota Watersheds supports an increase in Pelican River Watershed District's general operating levy cap from \$250,000 to an amount not to exceed \$500,000.

2019-11: Buffalo Red River Watershed District General Operating Levy Adjustment

Minnesota Watersheds supports an increase in Buffalo Red River Watershed District's general operating levy cap from \$250,000 to an amount not to exceed \$500,000.

2017-05 Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District General Operating Levy Adjustment

Minnesota Watersheds supports the efforts of Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District to draft and advance special legislation affecting a change in its general fund levy cap.

URBAN STORMWATER

2022-01 Support Creation of a Stormwater Reuse Task Force

Minnesota Watersheds supports administratively or legislatively including at least one Minnesota Watersheds member on the Minnesota Department of Health's workgroup to move forward, prioritize, and implement the recommendations of the interagency report on reuse of stormwater and rainwater in Minnesota.

2022-02 Support Limited Liability for Certified Commercial Salt Applicators

Minnesota Watersheds supports enactment of state law that provides limited liability protection to commercial salt applicators and property owners using salt applicators who are certified through the established state salt-applicator certification program and follow best management practices.

WATER QUANTITY, DRAINAGE, AND FLOOD CONTROL

2022-03: Seek Increased Support and Participation for the Minnesota Drainage Work Group (DWG)

- Minnesota Watersheds communications increase awareness of the DWG (meeting dates and links, topics, minutes, reports) amongst members.
- Minnesota Watersheds training opportunities strongly encourage participation in the DWG by watershed staff and board managers (for watersheds that serve as ditch authorities or work on drainage projects) – for e.g., add agenda space for DWG member updates, host a DWG meeting as part of a regular event.
- In preparation for Minnesota Watersheds member legislative visits, staff add a standing reminder for watershed drainage authorities to inform legislators on the existence, purpose, and outcomes of the DWG, and reinforce the legitimacy of the DWG as a multi-faceted problem-solving body.
- During Minnesota Watersheds staff Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) visits, regularly seek updates on how facilitation of the DWG is leading to improvements for member drainage authorities and convey this information to members.

2022-05: Obtain Stable Funding for Flood Damage Reduction and Natural Resources Enhancement Projects

Minnesota Watersheds supports collaborating with the Red River Watershed Management Board and state agencies to seek funding from the Minnesota Legislature to provide stable sources of funding through existing or potentially new programs that provide flood damage reduction and/or natural resources enhancements. A suggested sustainable level of funding is \$30 million per year for the next 10 years.

2021-05: Support Crop Insurance to Include Crop Losses Within Impoundment Areas

Minnesota Watersheds supports expansion of Federal Multi-Peril Crop Insurance to include crop losses within impoundment areas.

2020-04 Support Temporary Water Storage on DNR Wetlands during Major Flood Events

Minnesota Watersheds supports the temporary storage of water on existing DNR-controlled wetlands in the times of major flood events.

2019-02: Add a Classification for Public Drainage Systems that are Artificial Watercourses

Minnesota Watersheds supports removal of the default Class 2 categorization for public drainage systems that are artificial watercourses and supports a default Class 7 categorization for public drainage systems that are artificial watercourses.

2019-03 Support for Managing Water Flows in the Minnesota River Basin Through Increased Water Storage and Other Strategies and Practices

Minnesota Watersheds supports efforts to manage the flow of water in the Minnesota River Basin and the Minnesota River Congress in its efforts to increase water storage on the landscape; and Minnesota Watersheds supports the Minnesota River Congress in its efforts to secure state and federal programs targeted specifically to increase surface water storage in the Minnesota River Watershed.

2019-04: Clarify County Financing Obligations and/or Authorize Watershed District General Obligation Bonding for Public Drainage Projects

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation to achieve one or both of the following:

- a) To clarify that an affected county must finance a watershed district drainage project on project establishment and request of the watershed district; and
- b) To authorize watershed districts to finance drainage project establishment and construction by issuance of bonds payable from assessments and backed by the full faith and credit of the watershed district; and further provide for adequate tax levy authority to assure the watershed district's credit capacity.

WATER QUALITY, LAKES, WETLANDS, RIVERS, AND STREAMS

2022-06: Limit Wake Boat Activities

Minnesota Watersheds supports working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to utilize the research findings from the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory and seek legislation to achieve one or more of the following:

- Limit lakes and areas of lakes in which wake boats may operate;
- Require new and existing wake boats to be able to completely drain and decontaminate their ballast tanks; and
- Providing funding for additional research on the effects of wake boats on aquatic systems.

2020-03 Soil Health Goal for Metropolitan Watershed Management Plans

Minnesota Watersheds supports amending Minnesota Rule 8410.0080 to include a goal for soil health in watershed management plans and ten-year plan amendments.

2019-07 Chinese Mystery Snail Designation Change and Research Needs

Minnesota Watersheds supports Chinese Mystery Snail prevention and control research and to change the Chinese Mystery Snail designated status in Minnesota as a regulated species to a prohibited species.

2017-02 Temporary Lake Quarantine Authorization to Control the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation granting to watershed districts, independently or under DNR oversight, the authority, after public hearing and technical findings, to impose a public access quarantine, for a defined period of time in conjunction with determining and instituting an AIS management response to an infestation.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

2022-04: Clarification of Watershed District Project Establishment with Government Aid or as Part of a Plan

Minnesota Watersheds supports working with BWSR to clarify Minnesota Statutes § 103D.605, Subd. 5.

2021-03: Support Increased Flexibility in Open Meeting Law

- Minnesota Watersheds supports changes to the Open Meeting Law to provide greater flexibility in the use of interactive technology by allowing members to participate remotely in a nonpublic location that is not noticed, up to three times in a calendar year per manager.
- Minnesota Watersheds supports allowing public participation from a remote location by interactive technology, or alternatively from the regular meeting location where interactive technology will be made available for each meeting, unless otherwise noticed under Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021.
- Minnesota Watersheds supports changes to the Open Meeting Law requiring watershed districts to prepare and publish procedures for conducting public meetings using interactive technology.

2021-06: Support 60-day Review Required for State Agencies on Policy Changes

Minnesota Watersheds supports requiring state agencies to provide a meaningful, not less than 60-day review and comment period from affected local units of government on new or amended water management policies, programs, or initiatives with a response to those comments required prior to adoption.

2021-07: Support Metro Watershed-based Implementation Funding (WBIF) for Approves 103B Plans Only

Minnesota Watersheds supports BWSR distribution of metro WBIF among the 23 watershed management organizations with state-approved comprehensive, multi-year 103B watershed management plans. Those plans implement multijurisdictional priorities at a watershed scale and facilitate funding projects of any eligible local government unit (including soil and water conservation districts, counties, cities, and townships).

AGENCY RELATIONS

2019-01 Streamline the DNR permitting process

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation, rules, and/or agency policies to streamline the DNR permitting process by increasing responsiveness, decreasing the amount of time it takes to approve permits, providing a detailed fee schedule prior to application, and conducting water level management practices that result in the DNR reacting more quickly to serious, changing climate conditions.

REGULATIONS

2020-01 Appealing Public Water Designations

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation that would provide landowners with a more formal process to appeal decisions made by the DNR regarding the designation of public waters including the right to fair representation in a process such as a contested case proceeding which would allow landowners an option to give oral arguments or provide expert witnesses for their case.

2019-05 Watershed District Membership on Wetland Technical Evaluation Panels

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation to allow technical representatives of watershed districts to be official members of wetland technical evaluation panels.

2019-06: Oppose Legislation that Forces Spending on Political Boundaries

Minnesota Watersheds opposes legislation that establishes spending requirements or restricts watershed district spending by political regions or boundaries.

NATURAL RESOURCES

No resolutions currently in this category.

Resolutions to Sunset

Effective December 31, 2023

It should be noted that in July of 2022, the sunseting deadline was extended for resolutions expiring in 2017 by two years due to the pandemic and its influence on lobbying efforts. **All 2017 resolutions will have a sunset date of 2024.**

2018-02 Increase the \$250k General Fund Tax Levy Limit

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation to increase or remove the \$250,000 general fund ad valorem tax levy limit set in MN statute 103D.905 Subd. 3. If the limit is raised to a new dollar amount, Minnesota Watersheds supports an inflationary adjustment be added to statute.

2018-03 Require Timely Appointments to the BWSR Board

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation that requires the Governor to make BWSR board appointments within 90 days of a vacancy or board member term expiration.

2018-04 Require Watershed District Permits for the DNR

Minnesota Watersheds supports an amendment to the MN Statute § 103D.315, Subd. 5, to include the MN Department of Natural Resources as a state agency required to get permits from watershed districts when applicable.

2018-06 Ensure Timely Updates to Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Plans

Minnesota Watersheds supports that WMA operation and maintenance plans and/or management plans are either drafted or brought current in a timely fashion, with input from local governmental entities, to ensure their consideration in future One Watershed, One Plan efforts.

2018-08 Reinforce Existing Rights to Maintain/Repair 103E Drainage Systems

Minnesota Watersheds supports legislation modeled after House File 2687 and Senate File 2419 of the ninetieth legislature (2017-2018) reinforcing that the DNR cannot restrict existing rights to maintain and repair 103E public drainage systems.

2018-09 Clean Water Council Appointments

Minnesota Watersheds may ask the representative of the Clean Water Council to resign when they lose their direct association to a watershed district; and that Minnesota Watersheds will recommend to the Governor's office that managers and/or administrators in good standing with Minnesota Watersheds be appointed to the Clean Water Council.