

FRESHWATER

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

A changing climate has altered how water flows, strained water systems, impacted roadways, and changed where and when water is needed. We need to repair, prevent, and adapt to ensure a secure and equitable water future.



1

RESTORATION & RESILIENCE IN THE NATURAL WATER ENVIRONMENT

WATER STORAGE SF 478

Water storage reduces artificially high water levels in our rivers and minimizes erosion damage by temporarily storing water, at critical times, and in key places. **Freshwater supports funding for on-the-ground water storage projects** covered by BWSR's two new programs: Water Quality and Storage and Soil Health. Together, they will allow water to be held back and soak into the soil, reducing flow in priority agricultural watersheds while also sequestering greenhouse gases in the soil.

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD) FUNDING

SWCDs are critical partners for soil and water conservation and will continue to be for ensuring resilient landscapes. A stable and sufficient funding source is critical for SWCD's future work, but their funding has become a political football. This impacts their ability to plan, retain staff, and build technical and social capacity. **Freshwater supports SWCD funding from the Tax Bill, discontinuing use of Clean Water Fund dollars.**

CLEAN WATER LEGACY FUNDING

In 2008, Minnesotans voted in support of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution to protect water, habitat, and the environment. The Amendment increased the state sales tax by 3/8's of 1% from July 1, 2009 until 2034. A 33% share of the sales tax revenue from the Legacy Amendment goes to the **Clean Water Fund** which is vital as Minnesota continues the work of **protecting, enhancing, and restoring waters** across the state. These dollars are expressly **meant to add to—not replace—existing funding.** Freshwater has worked with the Clean Water Council to reform the processes for funding to maximize return on investment for the State's waters. **Freshwater continues to support the Clean Water Council's recommendations for use of Clean Water Fund dollars.**

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ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE IN THE BUILT WATER ENVIRONMENT

DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure we rely on for clean drinking water is facing challenges it was not meant to address, which threatens public health and the safety of our drinking water. **Freshwater supports increasing the technical capacity** of communities to optimize water treatment to address emerging risks, including PFAS, chloride and increasing water volumes.

WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Minnesota's water infrastructure needs \$11B in investments to keep water clean and safe for drinking and for fishing, swimming, and boating. **Freshwater supports increasing grants and low-interest-rate loans** for low-income, over-taxed communities in need of stormwater and wastewater infrastructure improvements.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT FUNDS

Federal funds available through IJA provide an incredible opportunity to help Minnesota's infrastructure dollars go farther, but only if we act now. **Freshwater supports the state acting quickly to appropriate matching funds for IJA programs related to water**, and take advantage of IJA funds for lead service replacement projects that do not require a state match.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND SF442/ HF172

The Legislative Citizens Commission on the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund has proposed to fund valuable research including \$417,000 to study the feasibility of managed aquifer recharge, a tool that may be needed in groundwater-stressed areas of the state and that can be used to recharge aquifers. The time to address the technical and permitting aspects of managed aquifer recharge is now. **Freshwater supports the package of projects from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and encourages quick passage.**

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND REAUTHORIZATION

The legislative authorization for the ENRTF sunsets in 2025. Freshwater supports its reauthorization, in addition to an improved LCCMR process to fund the best science to improve Minnesota's environment.