

February 12, 2025

Re: Support of S.F. 506– Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriation Bill

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Committee,

Environmental organizations across the state are dedicated to protecting the people and places Minnesotans love. The Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund has helped further this mission, providing over \$900 million in innovative funding for natural resource management projects. Last November, Minnesota voters overwhelmingly voted to continue sending a portion of the state lottery proceeds to the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund with 77% approval. We are proud to support the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriations Bill, which continues this special Minnesota tradition of environmental stewardship.

The Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund benefits current citizens and future generations by providing long-term, consistent, and stable funding for projects to protect, conserve, and enhance Minnesota's "air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources." While challenging to summarize the accomplishments of projects over more than thirty years, since 1991 the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund has provided approximately \$1.1 billion to over 1,700 projects benefitting every county in the state.

Every year Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars contribute to Minnesotans having cleaner water, healthier forests and prairies, world-class hiking and biking trails, cutting-edge natural resources research institutions, opportunities for enriching and educational environmental programming, and abundant fish and wildlife. The Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund helps all types of entities from all over Minnesota to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's natural resources: small towns to large urban cities, counties and watershed districts, Minnesota's colleges and universities, non-profits and private companies, and federal and state agencies.

Among the many accomplishments that ENRTF has been instrumental in funding, include:

Supporting critical research developing tools to detect and combat Chronic Wasting Disease, establishing long-term lake ecosystem monitoring through the creation of the DNR's Sentinel Lakes program, facilitating ground-breaking research to prevent, detect, and mitigate invasive species, reintroducing bison, introducing tens of thousands of students to wilderness canoeing, building and improving hundreds of miles of trails, including the Superior Hiking Trail, Mesabi Trail, and Glacial Edge Trail.

We appreciate and acknowledge the extensive vetting done by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota's Natural Resources. The breadth of projects in S.F. 506 is critical to protecting and enhancing Minnesota's environment and natural resources. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Audubon Upper Mississippi River
Austin Audubon Society
Austin Coalition for Environmental Sustainability
Bike Minnesota
Central Minnesota Audubon Society
Citizens' Climate Lobby Minnesota
Climate Land Leaders

Clean Water Action
Conservation Minnesota
Ducks Unlimited
Environmental Initiative
Freshwater
Friends of the Mississippi River
Great River Greening
Izaak Walton League – MN Division
Lakeville Friends of the Environment
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Minnesota Land Trust
Minnesota Ornithologists Union
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
Minnesota Valley Trust
Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Prairie Lakes Audubon Chapter
Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota
Pheasants Forever, Inc
Pollinator Friendly Alliance
Quails Forever
Rainbow Research
St. Paul Bird Alliance
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
Trust for Public Land
Urban Bird Collective
Vote Climate
Wild River Audubon
Zumbro Valley Audubon Society