



2011 Special Legislative Session

Responses to Frequently Asked Questions

How does the final Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Finance bill affect the MPCA budget?

- **40% reduction** (\$6.9 million over the biennium) of **General Fund budget** – the General Fund is a small portion of the overall MPCA budget (this reduction decreases the General Fund from about 5 percent to 3 percent of the Agency's overall budget)
- **100% shift** of funding for those **SSTS activities** funded from the General Fund to Environmental Fund
- **81.5% reduction** (\$3.5 million over the biennium) in General Fund dollars for **Clean Water Partnership grants** – these grants are competitive and thus, funding for **about 24 grants for watershed, county and other local projects** was eliminated
- **38% reduction** (from \$870,000 to \$536,000 for the biennium) in General Fund dollars for the transfer of environmental health tracking and **biomonitoring** funds to the Minn. Department of Health this biennium – all funding eliminated in FY 2014-2015
- **69% reduction** (\$1.68 million) in funding for **administrative support**
- **\$75,000 one time funds** from the Environmental Fund was included for the completion of a **water resources study** – this study is to be led by the MPCA and evaluate how water is managed in Minnesota and make recommendations to the Legislature
- **One-half of the enforcement penalties** (\$1.5 million) was restored to the Environmental Fund – which is key to maintaining a positive balance in the fund, unless the loss is replaced by an equal source of dollars
- **\$166,000 in FY2012 and \$335,000 in FY2013** increased expenditures for the Air Program was approved from the Environmental Fund – this reflects the additional fees expected to be collected in these years.
- **\$42 million cap** on transfer of dollars from the **Environmental Fund to the Remediation Fund** – this is an increase from the FY2010-2011 budget and allows the MPCA to combine these dollars and bonding dollars to maximize clean-up efforts

Was the MPCA included in the state Bonding Bill?

- **\$7 million in bonding** for the **Closed Landfill Program** was included in the Bonding Bill – the additional bonding dollars allow the MPCA to stay on its schedule to complete construction by FY2015 at all sites but the Freeway Landfill
- **\$0.55 million in bonding** for the **Capital Assistance Program** was included in the Bonding Bill – these funds will allow the Pope-Douglas Waste-to-Energy Facility to improve its ability to provide steam heat to buildings in Alexandria

What happened to the Legacy Bill?

- The Legacy Bill contained nearly **\$48 million** for the MPCA
- **\$15 million** for **surface water assessments and monitoring** to keep up with MPCA's goal to assess and monitor 10% of our waters each year, with a \$200,000 carve out for the Red River Watch program
- **\$18.8 million** for **TMDL studies and implementation plans** to improve impaired waters and keep up with MPCA's goal of completing TMDLs for 10% of our waters each year
- **\$2 million** in **Clean Water Partnership Grants** – this level of funding is similar to that of the previous biennium
- **\$2.25 million** for **groundwater assessment and monitoring**

- **\$1.5 million** for **Lower St. Louis River and Duluth Harbor** water quality improvement projects
- **\$800,000 each year** of new funding was appropriated for **NPDES wastewater and stormwater permit** efforts related to **TMDL implementation plans**
- **\$225,000 each year** to fund a **groundwater study along the I-94 corridor** between the Twin Cities and St. Cloud was included as a transfer to the **Environmental Quality Board**

What changes affect the feedlot program?

- Large feedlots may need only a state feedlot permit (SDS), instead of a joint federal/state permit, we are working on the details of the new permit system
- Animal waste must be managed in accordance with state laws and it remains illegal to discharge waste into waters of the state
- A proposal relating to how animal numbers are determined for feedlot permitting was removed
- Additional funding was provided ongoing to support the additional case-by-case decisions needed due to these changes

What happened with the wild rice sulfate standard?

- We need knowledge and time to tackle this issue, which the legislation provides
- The current standard of 10 milligrams per liter remains in effect
- The Legacy Bill contains \$1.5 million to do a scientific study to determine whether the current standard is still correct or needs modification to protect wild rice
- The Finance Bill creates an advisory group to provide input on a wild rice sulfate study and any possible standard revision and restates current state and federal regulations in terms of timetables to comply with the water quality standard