



# Groundwater Protection Spending Proposal

## *Protecting Minnesota's groundwater*

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Groundwater is a vitally important resource in Minnesota that provides at least 73 percent of Minnesotans with their primary source of drinking water. Groundwater is the source of water for 932 of 954 community water supply systems across the state. Groundwater also supplies a majority of water for the irrigation of crops and is the base flow for the state's streams, lakes and wetlands.

### Background

The 2009 Legislature appropriated \$5 million in fiscal year 2011 to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for "groundwater protection or prevention of groundwater degradation activities" and required the MPCA to report to the legislature on the intended use of the funds. The Groundwater Protection Spending Proposal was prepared to meet this legislative requirement.

The proposal, which must be approved by law before the funds can be spent, describes groundwater protection needs, identifies proposed activities to be funded by the appropriation, and identifies the outcomes that will be achieved by the protection activities. The proposal was developed by the MPCA with significant input from an interagency workgroup consisting of representatives from the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Board of Water and Soil Resources, Metropolitan Council, Environmental Quality Board and Minnesota Geospatial Information Office.

### Groundwater protection activities

The MPCA staff and interagency workgroup discussed groundwater protection needs and current activities underway at the state and local level. Based on these discussions, and in consideration of the one-time nature of the \$5 million appropriation, the group focused on groundwater protection activities that will fill immediate needs and inform future protection efforts.

This focus on immediate needs also recognizes the many planning activities underway that will further groundwater protection in Minnesota.

The following groundwater protection activities are the focus of the spending proposal:

1. Implement groundwater protection practices at the local level and evaluate the effectiveness of those practices;
2. Develop a model approach for enhancing groundwater protection planning at the local level; and
3. Provide for better groundwater data access and sharing.

The specific activities in the proposal will help fill immediate needs in groundwater protection, particularly at the local level where groundwater practices can best be implemented, and will improve the ability of state agencies to assist local government in planning and implementing protection

**Legislative charge :** The statutory requirement for the Groundwater Protection and Spending Proposal (proposal) is found in the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Funding Bill (House File 1231, Session Law Chapter 172. Article 2, Section 4, paragraph (m) states: *"\$5,000,000 the second year is for groundwater protection or prevention of groundwater degradation activities. By January 15, 2010, the commissioner, in consultation with the commissioner of natural resources, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and other agencies, shall submit a report to the chairs of the House of Representatives and senate committees with jurisdiction over the clean water fund on the intended use of these funds. The legislature must approve expenditure of these funds by law."*

practices. The approval and implementation of this spending proposal will result in stronger groundwater protection, and will provide state agencies with the information and experience needed to develop a long-term implementation plan for groundwater protection.

### Current groundwater protection activities

Groundwater protection was included as an element of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment passed by Minnesota voters on November 4, 2008.

A total of \$13.6 million dollars was appropriated by the 2009 Legislature for drinking water and groundwater protection from the Clean Water Fund (established by the Constitutional Amendment). Funded activities include enhanced groundwater monitoring, accelerated wellhead protection planning and implementation, enhanced efforts to address nitrate problems and promote and evaluate fertilizer best management practices, and implementation of elements of the Metro Master Water Supply Plan.

In addition to these activities, several planning efforts are underway that will inform groundwater protection

statewide, ranging from the DNR's legislative report on surface water and groundwater protection to the University of Minnesota's effort to develop a framework for sustainable water management.

With all of these activities underway or ramping up, the state is well on its way to enhanced protection of its groundwater resources. However, gaps still exist. Approving and implementing the Groundwater Protection Spending Proposal is an important next step in addressing those gaps to help assure long-term protection of Minnesota's groundwater resources.

### Contact information

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The full report is available at:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/lrwq-g1sy10.pdf>.

<b>Implementation Outcomes:</b>		
<i>Local Groundwater Protection Grants</i>	\$3,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerated local implementation of priority groundwater protection practices.</li> <li>Better understanding of local capacity and needs for implementing groundwater protection.</li> </ul>
<i>Effectiveness Evaluation</i>	\$750,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced understanding of prevention effectiveness.</li> <li>Guidance for refining practices to strengthen the effectiveness of groundwater protection.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Outcomes:</b>		
<i>Local Groundwater Protection Planning</i>	\$750,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three to five model local water plan enhancements.</li> <li>A model approach for amending local water plans to enhance groundwater protection.</li> <li>A proposed approach for scaling-up the local planning effort to all vulnerable aquifers not addressed by wellhead protection.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sharing and Access Outcomes:</b>		
<i>Enhanced interagency data and coordination access</i>	\$500,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation plan for enhanced data coordination and access.</li> <li>Common data format for accessing and sharing groundwater data.</li> <li>Incorporation of existing monitoring well construction records into the County Well Index.</li> </ul>