

Investigate pollution in a sensitive ecology

Fund a comprehensive study of nitrate contamination of groundwater in Minnesota's karst region.

What's the issue?

Southeastern Minnesota is characterized by its karst geology, which features "porous" topography with underground drainage systems, sinkholes, and caves. The karst region is more vulnerable to pollution than other landscapes; contaminants can quickly find routes from the surface into groundwater. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture found that 19 of 24 townships in Fillmore County alone have private wells at or above the health risk limit for nitrates. Nitrates in drinking water can pose human-health risks, especially to infants and the elderly.

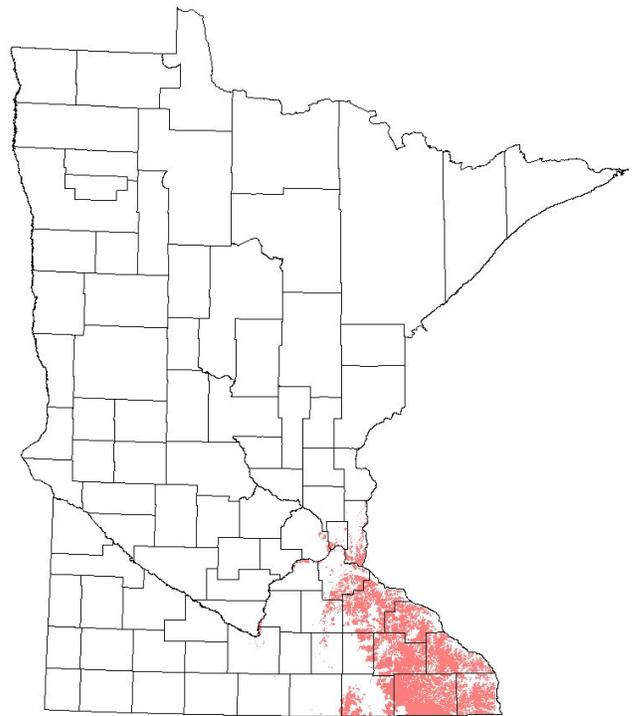
Proposal

Governor Walz is recommending a \$643,000 appropriation from the general fund in FY 2020 for scoping a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) to study and address nitrate pollution of groundwater in the sensitive karst region of southeastern Minnesota. The GEIS scoping and design process will identify and bring together technical experts, interested parties and members of the affected community to design a thorough and effective analysis. Scoping will more specifically identify the issues and geographic areas to be addressed in the generic EIS, including which programs, policies and regulatory requirements may need to be refined to better protect the karst region of southeastern Minnesota from nitrate contamination of groundwater.

Why is it important?

Scoping is the first step in the process of completing a GEIS. The completed GEIS would eventually provide a ready source of information for decision-making and allow the public to participate in related approval decisions and processes in a more knowledgeable and meaningful way. Information would be valuable to state and local decision makers on the past, present, and future effects (environmental, public health, and economic) of nitrate contamination in the region.

Karst region of Minnesota



Courtesy of MN Dept. of Natural Resources

For more information

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Stagecoach Spring by Watson Creek in Fillmore County