

# Budget for One Minnesota



## ENSURING CLEAN WATER, TAKING CLIMATE ACTION, REDUCING WASTE

Protecting and enhancing Minnesota’s valuable natural and public resources is vital to enhancing human health, our ecosystems, and Minnesota’s economy. Our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater are powerful symbols of our state and they provide vital drinking water, recreational and tourism opportunities, wildlife habitat, water for agriculture and industrial uses, and more. We will address climate change head on by engaging communities across Minnesota and working to build out our electric vehicle charging infrastructure. In addition, we aim to reduce waste by expanding opportunities to grow markets that divert usable material like recyclables and food waste and slow the creation of landfills that we must manage and safeguard.

### PRIORITIES



#### **Investigating nitrate pollution in the karst region**

Governor Walz is recommending a \$643,000 appropriation for a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS), to study and address nitrate pollution of groundwater in the sensitive karst region of southeastern Minnesota. The GEIS would investigate sources of nitrate, evaluate ways to prevent and address nitrate contamination, and inform the development and review of new projects. The GEIS process will bring together state and local decision makers, technical experts, interested parties, and members of the affected communities to review collected data and identify how to refine programs or regulations to better protect the karst region from nitrate contamination. A complete GEIS would inform decisions on new and expanding projects in the region, and allow the public to participate in those decisions in more knowledgeable and meaningful ways.



#### **Continuing the cleanup of Lake Superior’s headwaters**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is in the middle of a multi-year effort to help clean up industrial waste at several sites in the St. Louis River estuary and the Duluth/Superior harbor. Before modern environmental laws, pollution from mills and factories along the St. Louis River and Duluth harbor left a legacy of contamination, including mercury, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and more. The pollutants have settled into the sediments in the river bottom and continue to threaten public health and contaminate fish and wildlife. A \$484,000 appropriation is needed to cover cleanup costs, and to leverage federal funding. The ambitious cleanup effort will also

create new wildlife habitat, and allow Minnesotans to enjoy Duluth's scenic waterfront in new ways.



### **Cleaning up Freeway Landfill and Dump**

The Freeway Landfill and Freeway Dump in Burnsville were built in the 1960s without a liner; landfill liners protect surrounding water and soil from contamination. Groundwater levels beneath the landfill and dump are being kept artificially low by pumping at the nearby Kraemer Quarry. Once the quarry stops operating, the groundwater will saturate the garbage; contaminated groundwater will drain to the Minnesota River. A 2017 appropriation of \$3 million must be extended so the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency can complete the investigation and engineering design work at the Freeway Landfill.



### **Expanding Minnesota markets for recyclables**

Domestic recycling markets have been flooded in the wake of China's decision to stop accepting material from the U.S. It's imperative to support local recycling markets, to ensure that recycling processors and brokers can cover their costs, and that recycling of waste remains viable. A \$400,000 annual appropriation would provide grants to new and existing Minnesota manufacturing companies so they can expand their use of recycled materials.



### **Diverting food waste from landfills**

More than 30% of what we throw away is organic material, such as food waste. A large portion of that food could be "rescued" from grocery or retail stores and be used to feed people. The rest can be used for animal feed or processed into value-added products such as compost. None of it belongs in landfills. Removing organics from the waste stream will reduce our need for expensive landfills in the future. A \$750,000 ongoing annual appropriation would be used to support increased food rescue efforts and help prevent food waste, evaluate emerging technologies for processing food waste, and address waste stream contamination issues.



### **Meeting Minnesotans' expectations for online services**

An annual appropriation of \$800,000 will accelerate the movement of data and services online and maintain existing online services. With this funding, the agency would develop online tools to serve Minnesota industries, wastewater treatment facilities, and feedlots over the next two years. Increasing MPCA online services will save businesses, municipalities, citizens, and the agency time and money.



### **Funding statewide outreach to advance climate-change efforts**

Governor Walz proposes a \$250,000 appropriation for public meetings across the state so that Minnesota communities, businesses, citizens, and non-governmental organizations can participate in climate change policymaking. This proposal

includes statewide, multi-agency outreach, logistics, and follow up, and support for environmental justice efforts. Multiple state agencies, working with input from communities and the private sector, will develop the scope of work and produce a report and climate change roadmap outlining potential policies that cut across all sectors.



### **Expanding Minnesota's electric-vehicle charging network**

In Minnesota, the transportation sector has eclipsed the power-generation sector as the largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG). Governor Walz recommends a financing package to quickly build out the state's EV charging infrastructure. A onetime \$1.5 million appropriation and ongoing funding from EV registrations will fund this effort. Improving the EV charging network in Minnesota will encourage electric-vehicle purchases and lower GHG emissions.