

## Collect real-time nitrate data in Minnesota waters

### Challenge

Nitrate concentrations have steadily increased in the Mississippi River since the mid-1970s. On average, 158 million pounds of nitrate per year flows through the point where the Mississippi River leaves Minnesota. Two million Minnesotans get their drinking water from the Mississippi River. Elevated nitrate levels in Minnesota's rivers increase the cost of operating community drinking water supplies.

Currently, measuring nitrate levels in Minnesota rivers requires physically collecting a grab sample and transporting it to a laboratory for analysis. This method is time-consuming and limits the amount of nitrate monitoring conducted each year.



### Proposal

Governor Walz requests \$1 million from the General Fund to design and install a network of 40 nitrate sensors for the continuous, real-time monitoring of nitrates at key locations in the Mississippi, Red River, and St. Louis River basins. Installing the in-stream nitrate sensors would facilitate continuous real-time water quality data collection representing the majority of river systems in the state. This improved monitoring network will help identify potential impacts to drinking water and target future efforts to reduce nitrate pollution.

### Why it's important

Monitoring and communicating water quality data in real time is critical for protecting Minnesota's waters. Installing in-stream nitrate sensors in key Minnesota rivers would facilitate the collection of continuous, real-time water quality data that is not currently available. This data would be far more complete than existing data from intermittent grab samples. Data from this network would be used to track progress, pinpoint investments to improve water quality, and allow for more public awareness about how land use decisions impact water quality in real-time.

### For more information

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