

Manage stormwater during extreme weather events

Cities across Minnesota need funding for infrastructure improvements.

Challenge

The past five years have been some of the wettest on record across Minnesota. Frequent, heavy rain events have resulted in increased flooding, and in many communities, aging and undersized storm sewers are inadequate for the volume of water they regularly receive. As our climate continues to warm, extreme wet weather events will continue to push Minnesota's stormwater infrastructure to the breaking point, presenting a direct threat to homes, businesses, property, and the environment.



Communities have made it clear they need help. In 2021, 100% of cities included in an informal survey of infrastructure needs conducted by MPCA indicated the need for grants to support improvements to their stormwater infrastructure. Money available through existing programs such as the Public Facilities Authority's loan and grant programs do not cover stormwater-specific upgrades that aim to address high-volume flows, leaving a significant funding gap for many Minnesota municipalities. Without support, these communities will continue to face flooding, upending the livelihoods of their residents.

Proposal

Governor Walz requests \$21.1 million to establish a grant program for stormwater infrastructure upgrades in communities. These upgrades will help to mitigate flood damage and adapt for increasing severe rain events. Projects funded by this program would range from new or enhanced stormwater management systems that will increase storage capacity to the establishment of rain gardens, tree trenches and other natural water management tools.

The Local Government Stormwater Construction Grant program will fill an existing funding gap and eliminate competition that currently exists in some funding programs between stormwater and wastewater infrastructure rehabilitation proposals. Of the amount requested, \$20 million in bonding appropriations is for grants and \$1.1 million in General Fund cash is for program administration.

Why it's important

Minnesota now ranks second in the country for extreme weather events – second only to California. According to the Insurance Federation of Minnesota, extreme weather events have caused insurance premiums to increase by 366% in Minnesota since 1998. The Local Government Stormwater Construction Grant program represents a crucial investment to help Minnesota communities protect local property and adapt for the challenges brought by these extreme weather patterns.

This proposal recognizes that cities are best situated to identify their needs. The program provides the funds to implement their plans and support construction of projects that they have defined as highest priority. In addition to providing needed protection from increasing extreme weather incidents, communities will also see jobs created through infrastructure upgrades facilitated by this program.

For more information

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