

**Clean Water Council**  
**Budget and Outcomes Committee (BOC) Meeting Agenda**  
**Friday, July 10, 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

**Hybrid – Webex and Online**

*2026 BOC Members: Steve Besser, Dick Brainerd, Steve Christensen (BOC Chair), Warren Formo, Brad Gausman (BOC Vice-Chair), Holly Hatlewick, Annie Knight, Fran Miron*

**9:00 Regular Business**

- Introductions
- Approve agenda and June meeting minutes
- Chair and Staff update

**9:20 Public Comment**

Any member of the public wishing to address the Council regarding something not on the agenda is invited to do so as a part of this agenda item.

**9:35 (INFORMATION ITEM) Framing our discussion**

We will touch briefly on where we are in the process, what we have reviewed so far, the nature of the decisions being made in July, and how today's conversations advance us towards developing a draft budget for the FY28-29 biennium.

**9:45 (INFORMATION ITEM) Outcomes from the survey**

Considerations developed at the end of the June 15 Council meeting were reworked for inclusion in a survey that was sent out the following week, inviting people not in attendance at the meeting to share their thoughts regarding which considerations should carry the most weight. This agenda item will introduce the outcomes from the survey so that they can be held alongside other input for discussions later in the morning.

**10:15 Break**

**10:30 (DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM) Budget priorities for FY28-29**

At the end of this meeting, the goal is to have a draft list of priorities regarding which proposals to add or increase, which to protect from decreases, and which to consider for decreases. This agenda item will begin with a reminder of content to keep in mind and will address each of these groups of priorities in turn.

**11:55 (INFORMATION ITEM) Next steps**

**12:00 Adjourn**

## Budget and Outcomes Committee Meeting Summary

### Clean Water Council (Council)

June 5, 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Committee Members present:** Steve Besser (Committee Chair), Dick Brainerd (Committee Vice Chair), Steve Christenson, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Holly Hatlewick, Fran Miron, and Annie Knight.

**No members are absent.**

To watch the Webex video recording of this meeting, please go to <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/clean-water-council-committees>, or contact [Brianna Frisch](#).

#### Regular Business

- Introductions
  - Tannie Eshenaur, with Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), will be retiring in August.
- Motion to approve the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda and the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting summary by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Steve Besser. Amendment to approve the May meeting minutes instead of February and March on the agenda. Motion carries unanimously.
- Chair update:
  - [Annual Mississippi River Paddle](#) event on June 13-14. You can paddle 145 miles from Brainerd to the Twin Cities.
- Staff update:
  - Jen is working on the public comment discussion items for the full Council June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. It is a great opportunity to glean input from folks who do not usually attend meetings. Public comments continue to come in. These comments are included in the Teams folder, and a summary is being recorded on a spreadsheet in the folder as well. Public comments will be in the next full Council meeting as well.
  - There will be construction outside the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) building. Please be check the [University Avenue reconstruction project](#) website for updates as the status changes frequently.
  - Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) is working on a long-range water plan. Looking at water quantity and water quality for 2100, looking at the preparation of different scenarios. Bonnie Keeler pulled her researchers to have a facilitated discussion; they talked about looking back over a hundred years at the major events in the past 100 years. This is looking at the items emerging now to change the paradigm shifts around water. Council input work is coming up in July or August, to focus on that as well.
  - There has been some changes suggested through the Minnesota Plumbing board, which would need rulemaking changes. It would prohibit the use of stormwater for water reuse. There is a lot of discussion happening, looking at a pause in the process, to reconnect with this topic (so it does not stop a practice). A lot of CWF dollars have gone for this practice.
    - *Fran Miron:* I think the Policy Committee should weigh in and submit comments for this item.
    - *Response from Jen Kader:* I sent a note to Council leadership, to get it on the radar, to discuss it prior to the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**No Public Comment** (*Webex 00:23:30*)

#### Proposal Review (*Webex 00:24:00*)

The BOC will submit initial considerations for funding directions and priority for each of the programs that were presented at the May Council meeting.

- Point Source Implementation Grants (MPFA) (*Webex 00:25:45*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 41, with a range of 31-50.
  - There were follow-up questions, which are included in the meeting packet.
  - Majority of BOC members view this program as high priority and hold steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

  - Brad Gausman: Reading the description, the CWC and the Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) look at specific impaired and threatened water bodies. How specific is that? *Response:* It is based on the permit

limits. Also, where the discharge is taking place. If it is more impaired, it would be stricter standard. We use prioritization from the project priority list.

- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Program (MPFA) (*Webex 00:30:30*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 40.7 (range of 31-50).
  - There was a follow-up question, which is included in the meeting packet.
  - Majority of BOC members view this as high priority and hold steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Fran Miron: With these systems, are there plans for capital improvements down the road? Are these systems designed like a city utility, so when the systems reach their life there is funding to replace?  
*Answer:* It depends on the system, because many are small. Anything funded through the PFA, we make sure they have technical financial capacity before approved. If they receive the water infrastructure funds, they are required to put fifty cents per thousand gallons sold, as part of a reserve account. Then, there is a reserve account for replacement.
- Dick Brainerd: Where does 39 projects come from? *Answer:* That is a good question, I was trying to figure it out myself when I took over. It is combination of technical assistance and construction projects. Perhaps, a snapshot in time for the list.
- Dick Brainerd: If you did 39, but there was a higher demand, how do you look to bridge it in terms of funding? *Answer:* It seems like a few proceed each year and have a long time to reach construction. It is a matter of organization. Get the project ready and wait until the funds are available. These often sit on the list for years, waiting for funding.
- Brad Gausman: How many technical assistance grants does the funds pay for?
  - *Answer:* Three or four. It is \$20,000 per system.
  - *Response from Brad Gausman:* Is there more demand?
  - *Answer:* It is good program. There is not a high demand, but I wish there was more.
- Dick Brainerd: What is your communication play to let people know about the funds?
  - *Answer:* There are two technical assistance providers at MPCA, and contract with Minnesota Rural Water. I am not sure why there is not more.
  - *Suzanne Bowman, MPCA:* Many of the regulatory mechanisms generate interest. Many sources are regulated by the counties. Perhaps, this is something we need to mention more, raising general awareness about it.
- Warren Formo: In my experience, mostly with private well owners, perhaps part of the reason for the low number is lack of experience of where things are failing. People will fly under the radar until there is a property sale. For small communities, is there a similar mechanism for compliance or inspection? *Suzanne Bowman, MPCA:* Our SSTS team, that has a list of facilities, there is an extensive list.
- Wastewater/Stormwater TMDL Implementation (MPCA), Suzanne Bowman and Ryan Anderson, MPCA (*Webex 00:43:45*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 38.9 (range of 29 -48).
  - Questions submitted in advance, which are included in the meeting packet.
  - Majority of BOC members view this as high priority and hold steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Holly Hatlewick: Does it include revisiting permits? Specifically, the spring cover crop agreement program? Is that part of the collaborative reevaluation process? Perhaps, cover crop is not the right word, perhaps nurse crop? While it does prevent some erosion, often we have missed a large erosion period prior to planting. I am curious about that be a part of the dialogue. *Answer:* We cannot include trading requirements in the permit. The purpose is to achieve those reductions. It is important to have a well founded plan at the start, and make sure it is followed through. All the documentation have to be submitted, and there are inspections of the sites. The changes of the conditions of the river and riverbanks, there are ongoing commitments, it requires maintenance if they are using this as a way to

meet their limit. If they decide to meet the limit in a different way, they can trade it, but the MPCA needs to know it is supported. The reduction is being made.

- Holly Hatlewick: Is there encouragement for other initiatives? *Answer:* They own a portion of the responsibility for the reduction. They do not know all the sediment shifts. If they have a system that is working, accomplishing the reduction that they need, they may not do more. There is potential.
- Dick Brainerd: This is a lot about stormwater too. How does that fit in? If stormwater use was prohibited, what would the impact be? *Answer:* It may change the nature of the scope of work. Our agency is in favor of stormwater reuse. We are committed to working so reuse is an option in the future. We work hard to bring all the voices to the table. Likely we would tweak the work plan, and work more with engagement with the parties. We are on top of it, and we remain committed to it.
- Dick Brainerd: What is the foundation for the plumbing board changes? *Answer:* I do not want to speak on their behalf. I can share some folks who have had concerns about some of the unknowns (specific limits for reuse of stormwater). Some groups have a desire for some specific limits to be set in place. The MPCA provides a menu of options, we are working with groups that have concerns and desires. There are many options because stormwater is different everywhere. We want safe and responsible reuse but not limit the practice if it does not need to be limited.
- Steve Besser: Are there any leveraged funds happening? *Answer:* These funds leverage the work being done in other parts of the program. There are a lot of staff that work. There is no direct match, but the effect the funds have amplifies the dollars in the regulatory world and TMDL world.
- Pesticide Testing of Private Wells (MDA) Kim Kaiser, MDA (*Webex 01:06:00*)
  - Scores reveal 39.7 (range of 22-48).
  - No questions provided in advance.
  - Overall, BOC members view this program as high priority and to hold steady the funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Warren Formo: I think it is a useful and helpful program. It sheds light on the pesticides in private wells. The farmers want to know what is happening in their wells. They are taking steps, using programs like this, and use it to build bigger communication plans to make sure folks are aware.
  - Brad Gausman: I see a private product and a private well, and public funding. Are there funds being raised to help this, or similar programs, from the sale of the pesticides we are testing for? *Answer:* This funding helps test the private wells. We can take the results and leverage our pesticide regulatory account to provide water treatment to the private well owners who have pesticides at the health risk limits. This additional funding is important to get results and be able to offer it.
  - Steve Christenson: Are there only three percent of the samples that detect pesticides? *Answer:* Three percent had pesticides above a health risk limit.
  - Dick Brainerd: Are you testing the same wells? *Answer:* No, we typically test different wells each time.
  - Monitoring for Pesticides in Surface Water and Groundwater (MDA), Dave Tollefson, MDA (*Webex 01:15:45*)
    - Scores reveal an average of 40.1 (range of 29-47.5).
    - No additional questions provided in advance.
    - Majority of BOC members view this program as high priority and hold steady funding.
- Questions/Comments:*
- Warren Formo: We have one of the best water monitoring programs for pesticides in the country. It is interesting to look through the data. It is a useful program. Farmers will express frustrations once and a while because it has led to some impairments. However, we are now seeing areas which had impairments, which are now being delisted from them.
  - Steve Christenson: Is there additional funding for this program from elsewhere? *Answer:* The majority of the is program is funded by pesticide regulatory account (PRA). The CWFs fund only about a third of this program. It enhances our existing program, allows us to look at more things.
- Contaminants of Emerging Concern (MDH) (*Webex 01:26:45*)
    - Scores reveal 41.2 (range of 32-50).
    - No additional questions provided in advance.

- Overall, BOC members view this program as a high priority and to hold steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Steve Christenson: What are we doing with CWFs to address PFAS contamination in the state? *Answer:* From our program, these funds have allowed us to expand our laboratory capacity for more staff and instruments, to be able to respond to the great needs for PFAS testing in our state. The funds were used as a catalyst to boost the program. We have been testing for PFAS since 2002 (one of the first state public health labs to test for it). Knowing that drinking water regulations coming out from the EPA moved the PFAS work to regulatory work in our lab. There are six PFAS compounds that are regulated. There are thousands of PFAS compounds out there which are a concern. We are able to use new instrumentation to look for compounds where standards do not exist yet. Through some pilot projects, we have identified other PFAS compounds in the environment, working to figure out the results of what it means.
- Steve Christenson: Have all the public or community water systems been tested for PFAS emerging CEC? *Answer:* I understand all the community systems have gone through testing, but there may be some transient non-community systems (small systems) that may need to be tested.
- Brad Gausman: Is what Minnesota doing, something other states desire to have, that we have an opportunity to be paid to share this information with others? *Answer:* It is a good question. Our program is highly respected, and envy of other states. There is a need to grow to look closer at the PFAS, and other states do not have the funding to do this work. We share the laboratory methods and SOPs, getting them published through peer reviewed articles, as well as informally sharing them with other labs trying to bring forward this testing. We have one of the nation's most cutting-edge programs for CECs for toxicology. We had been working with EPA on working on guidance for chemicals where there is no animal data (traditional toxicology testing) which is going away. So, more companies are using fewer animal studies, so we have been working with the EPA on new methods. Now, many of those EPA folks have left their positions, and have relocated to other positions. We are keeping our connections and looking to stay cutting edge. There is no income, data has not been sold, it belongs to the state of Minnesota. We are continuing to look for federal grants and funding, and we would be well situated to request funds.

- Aquifer Monitoring for Water Supply Planning (DNR), Jaimeson Wendel, DNR (*Webex 01:48:00*)

- Scores reveal an average of 41.2 (range of 33-50).
- No additional questions provided in advance.
- Majority of BOC members view this program as high priority and hold steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Dick Brainerd: How many testing sites to you have? *Answer:* There are a number of wells incorporated into the monitoring network (drilled for other purposes). Over time, we find greater value in other wells. So, over time some wells fall off our monitoring network, and some are added. It is hard to pin down, so it is around 1,257 wells, but we are working to get it close to 1,200 wells.

- Forestry BMP Evaluation and Lidar Hydrography Tools (DNR), Jaimeson Wendel, DNR (*Webex 01:52:00*)

- Scores reveal a wide range of 14-47 (average of 35.9).
- No questions provided in advance.
- Overall, BOC members view this as high priority and hold steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Dick Brainerd: For the LiDAR information, who uses the data the most? *Answer:* Some of the surveys done reveal the primary users as engineering firms, usually for stream restoration projects and BMPs and working with SWCDs for placement.
- Dick Brainerd: Is that a potential source of revenue? It is saving those firms a lot of money; it could be a way to get them to contribute to that funding for the data.
  - *Answer:* It might be pulling from one source of funding, because a lot of these are projects that are being worked on for 1W1Ps. It is public data, and we want them to have it and use it.

- Holly Hatlewick: To expand, would it be fair to say it is a credential and capacity process. We can access it online, but as far as that fee, we are doing some research but have to outsource it because of the credentials and capacity requirement.
  - Steve Christenson: How does this program help water quality? *Answer:* If you are talking about forestry, I would need to follow up. However, regarding the LiDAR, it reveals a lot of data. Data that can help know where to place the BMPs. This data is used daily with LGUs. Consultants can work with it, to help provide more fine-tuned designs to benefit water quality.
  - Steve Christenson: This is one step away from direct protection of water. I can see the connection, but it is attenuated.
- Lake Biological Monitoring and Assessment (formerly IBI), Jessica Massure, DNR (*Webex 02:00:00*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 41.2 (range 35-47)
  - There were three questions with robust answers, which are included in the meeting packet.
  - BOC members view this as a high priority and for steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Steve Christenson: Regarding Lake Itasca and results of monitoring there, can you comment on the work done there? *Answer:* I did not complete Lake Itasca but did other lakes nearby. If they did not score perfectly, it does not mean something is wrong. There is some variability to take into account.
  - Steve Besser: The making decisions in biological settings, is water chemistry and biological diversity. We need this data. It helps address issues.
  - Annie Knight: This data, from an NGO perspective, is the foundation for us to be able to do our work. The CWFs provide that foundation, other groups can do implementation work as a result of it. It is critical.
  - Dick Brainerd: Can you talk about the relationships with the lake associations? I am curious about the monitoring (if there are fish kills that appear, and folks think it is an impact on the water). *Answer:* We communicate as well as we can. The DNR connects regarding the scores, a bit of a traveling show, talking to them about the data and how they can improve their lake. These associations are often very invested, and they often want to help collect fish with the DNR and water sampling with the MPCA.
- Stream Flow Monitoring (DNR), Jaimeson Wendel, DNR (*Webex 02:14:15*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 40.7 (range of 35-46).
  - Three questions were asked in advance, and answers are included in the meeting packet.
  - BOC members view this as a high priority and for steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Dick Brainerd: There are 15 FTEs, how much does that cost for their salaries and benefits? It has maintained at 15 for a while. *Answer:* It varies from program to program, they are entry level hydrologists, but can vary. At the entry level, there can be more turnover where they advance to other positions. Ballpark about \$1.5-2 million. We have a large list of candidates for hydrologists. Currently, we have a number of high-quality folks coming from the federal level.
- Fish Contamination Assessment (DNR), Jaimeson Wendel, DNR (*Webex 02:21:00*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 37.9 (range 29-46).
  - There were two questions in advance and are included in the meeting packet.
  - Overall, BOC members view this as high priority, and to hold steady funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Brad Gausman: If I were to change the program name, I would say (more). There are studies on some deer and waterfowl. It will grow with importance to the outdoor communities.
  - Steve Besser: As each year goes by, folks are using Lake Finder Tool. The fishermen are finding it!
- Groundwater Assessment (MPCA), Melissa Lewis and Sandeep Burman, MPCA (*Webex 02:27:30*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 40.5 (range 32-48).
  - No questions submitted in advance of meeting.
  - Majority of BOC members view this program as high priority with increase funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Steve Christenson: The agency is proposing an increase, is it due to inflation or other concerns? *Answer:* We are working to bring PFAS into this program, so there is an increase associated with PFAS (previously funded with the PFAS Blueprint work, which was utilized already and is no longer available). To continue the PFAS, we need to fund it from somewhere and hope it is from here.
- Holly Hatlewick: Funding PFAS from CWFs, what will be different for this work? Anything? *Answer:* With PFAS we are constantly discovering it, and it is an expensive analysis, and we are trying to look for it in the state (still in the emerging contaminant phase). This then assists with the health values, but this is to look for it early in the aquifers, so other programs can follow up on it too.
- Dick Brainerd: What happens if we do not provide the increase. What happens to the PFAS work? *Answer:* If we do not receive the funds, we do not have a way to complete this PFAS work. It would probably stop for the two years but continue the core work of CECs. The CEC analysis is also very expensive work, and we work hard to get the best contacts. Without the increase, we would also need to scale back on the number of samples (and likely a cheaper analysis package from the lab). We do not have alternate funding for this PFAS work.
- *Comment from Melissa Lewis, MPCA:* The funding the MPCA used for this program over the last two years was not specifically appropriated to do this work. It was funded for the overarching PFAS Blueprint - because it took a while for the staff to be hired for that, we used some extra funds left for this program.
- River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment (MPCA), Kim Laing, MPCA (*Webex 02:42:00*)
  - Scores reveals average of 42.3 (range of 32-48).
  - There were no questions submitted in advance.
  - Majority of BOC members view this program as a high priority and to increase funding.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Warren Formo: You are asking for an increase, what will that funding go towards? *Answer:* There is a gap in funding, because they found FY27 additional funds to fill the gap. There was two years to set up the network. Those funds will not be able to continue, especially with cuts in other places. This increase would be to continue the nitrate sensor network, for calibration, maintenance, and to maintain them.
- Annie Knight: CWFs were funding it in the past, then the gap was covered, and now the CWFs will continue. *Answer:* Correct.
- Fran Miron: I would like supplementing to be addressed by the policy committee. Then, we can encourage agencies to seek out grants. It should be an agenda item for the policy committee.
- Brad Gausman: I always enjoy supplement/supplant conversations. Can you share more on the increase scope? *Answer:* We are talking about 2 FTE, and some funds to keep things going. I cannot share an exact number at this time. Additionally, we will be asking for the inflation costs. Relative to the size of the program it is a modest increase to cover these types of costs.
- Brad Gausman: I struggle with not knowing the numbers before the state agencies share.
  - *Answer from Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* This process is ahead of the Governor's process. The Governor's budget is not released until the Governor's Office shares that the agencies can talk about it (the cone of silence so to speak). This process has been given more flexibility to talk about in advance. The Council receives the numbers several months in advance. We are close and looking at mid-August about the numbers we will be asking for these programs. We work together for a balanced budget. The input from the Council is important during this process as well – it is valued.
  - *Warren Formo:* It is frustrating, but compared to twelve years ago, it is a much better process. It seems slow, but we are doing a lot of good work. It will help us in August. It comes together quickly.
  - *Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* It is hard for us as well, not to talk about it.
- River Watch and River of Dreams (Red River Board & International Water Institute), Asher Kingery and Rob Sip (*Webex 02:59:30*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 35.2 (range of 17-48).
  - There was one question in advance, and the response is included in the meeting packet.

- Overall, BOC members view this as a high priority. The BOC questions if this should be funded directly or, if it would be a grant program within the MPCA, who has directed funding to them in the past when the legislature directed it, or if it may be able to receive funding from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) community grants program.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Steve Besser: I opposed this program previously. Seeing declines in outdoor activities, we often talk about recruitment. It was great to hear about the kids talk about the program. I think we can include this program; it is not a huge amount overall of the funds. It seems like it is a step for us, as a Legacy Fund.
- Brad Gausman: To hear this is an afterschool extra curriculum. We talk about programs versus projects, and I appreciate it. I do think for our Council, this has community impact, I think it is wise for us in our storytelling, even a relatively small program. I would like to lend support to this opportunity.
- Dick Brainerd: I agree. We also have We Are Water, educating people about keeping the water clean, fits right into the concept here, but more directly and with younger generation. I wish there were more funds. Perhaps, there is an opportunity to reach out to other organizations.
- John Barten previously spoke with Jen Kader; would the funding come out of MPCA's River and Lake monitoring program? *Answer:* Historically, that is how that happened. An agency needs to grant the money out, so it has been the MPCA.
- Jen Kader: Whether or not it would make sense to have this become a grant program within the River and Lake Monitoring program. Then, if there were other programs in the future, they could apply and be a competitive grant program? *Answer:* It is a lumping and splitting view. It can sit on its own, and pass through the agency, versus managed and passed through within a large program.
- Steve Christenson: Historically, the Council has not wanted to fund projects and favors programs, perhaps this can be funded through the BWSR legacy grants program? *Answer from Warren Formo:* For several biennia, in the budget process there was never opposition to the program, it was about the how it came to be. The Legislature would go around the Council and fund it. I like John's idea, to create a program that exists where people could apply. It is an important thing for us to consider. It may not be something for us to discuss today. In August, it could be a workable option.
- Annie Knight: Have you made any previous proposal to the Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund? I think it would be a good fit for this program, or a way to leverage funding.
  - Steve Christenson: Additionally, perhaps the DNR's Community Grants program?
  - Asher Kingly: We have applied for the Legacy partners and will investigate other options. To make it clear the Red River Watershed Management Board is our fiscal agent. They provide a 50% match.
- Annie Knight: I see this as an investment in the future of conservation across the state. I think it is a good opportunity, as part of our Strategic Plan of community value. We could perhaps leverage it further.
- Steve Besser: Where are we funding We Are Water from? *Answer from Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* Right now, it is in the WRAPS program. Previously, each agency was providing some funding from each to group as one. It was suggested to be its own line item. Through the process, at the Legislature, it was sent from the Council as its own line item. The Legislature received it as its own line item, but it was wrapped into the WRAPs line item (it is funded out of it).
- River Watch (Friends of the Minnesota Valley), Ted Sus (*Webex 03:19:00*)
  - Scores reveal average of 34.3 (range 17-48).
  - There was one question asked before the meeting, and the response in the meeting packet.
  - Ted recently talked with a reporter, and they want to do a separate story on it. He will be sharing the story about it with the Council.
  - Overall, BOC members view this program as a high priority, with exploration of how the funds would be managed; There is more clarity needed regarding options of pass through an agency versus directly provide funds to applicants.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Brad Gausman: You are an NGO, is the Red River Management Board a government entity? *Answer:* Yes.

- Steve Christenson: What are you doing regarding fraud? *Answer:* There is a lot of oversight. We fill out a budget approved ahead of time (listing everything out, which is highly reviewed). We pay for it upfront and send invoices for reimbursement. I like this system, because there is a lot of documentation.
- Steve Christenson: Can you share the pass-through information? *Answer:* There is an agency oversight required. It is the requirements of a grants program in Minnesota, and it does have a lot of requirements (which have gotten stricter with the fraud concerns in the state). It is a very standard approach. It does not go through the Clean Water Council Administrators.
- Natural Shorelines, new DNR program, Jaimeson Wendel and Paul Radomski, DNR (*Webex 03:32:00*)
  - Scores reveal an average of 40.2 (range of 28-50).
  - There was a question in advance, which is included in the meeting packet.
  - Majority of BOC members view this as a priority as a medium/high (50/50 split on priority level), and to fund as able.

*No Questions/Comments:*

### **Olmsted/BWSR Addendum** (*Webex 03:37:00*)

Following the review of the BWSR Soil Health Program and the new proposal from Olmsted County, the Budget and Outcomes Committee encouraged the proposers to explore how the new program could be incorporated into the BWSR program. The addendum in the packet illustrates how that discussion has unfolded and is available for BOC feedback at this time.

*Questions/Comments:*

- Holly Hatlewick: It is clear it is a pilot, it is being tested as a model. There is talk of expansion. This biennium would focus on the pilot, correct? *Answer:* Yes, that is what was intended. It would be a pilot and then, expand statewide if things go well.
- Steve Christenson: Is BWSR supportive of this? Or is it being given to you? *Answer:* The hard part was navigating what the desire of the Council has been. We have both be open to making things work. The idea is still to expand statewide, which is something BWSR was already working on. It moves it forward actually. It plays off of the hard work that Olmstead County has done. It is a natural fit and a logical step. Regarding the funding side, it would be helpful to hear from the Council regarding the amount of funding.
- Dick Brainerd: I am happy to see you have come together.
- Jen Kader: Regarding the dollar amount, Olmstead Soil Health program received \$2 million from the legislature through the LCCMR bill this year. Does that impact the ask you would have for this program from the Council? *Answer from Skip Langer, Director at Olmstead Soil and Water:* We received \$2.87 million to expand the program in the Southeast region, to roll out and implement soil health programming. That is just enough to get going. We are happy to combine our efforts with the BWSR. We are used to working together. The more funding we receive, the more impact we can have on this part of the state.
- Steve Christenson: I was thinking about \$2.5 million, so perhaps matching the \$2.8 million. If that is the funding you receive, what would you do with it? *Answer:* The funding we receive is FY27, so we will kickstart the program in each of the counties, then look forward to having follow-up funding. There is about three years of farmers trying these new practices that will help to lead to more folks adopting the practices. We will continue to work to receive funding for this area, looking at all avenues. We think we have a good program, and we are just getting started.
- Holly Hatlewick: Can you briefly speak on the outreach and communication strategy beyond customers that have contracts? *Answer:* We have a robust outreach plan. We are sending mailings out to all of our producers, as well as the DNR conservation locations, all of our education events (part of the process in the program is to attend education events related to soil health adoption). Those are built into the request for the Council. There is also word of mouth, once people get on board. Farmer-to-farmer connections have been excellent.
- Dick Brainerd: What was the original request to the LCCMR? *Response:* The original request was for \$9 million, and we received \$2.817 million. It is scalable, so the more funding the further we can fund it.

- Overall, the BOC members view this funding as a high priority and would like to see it funded as appropriate (need to be determined). One member revealed a concern about the sustainability of the funds over time.

### **Budget Meetings Recap and FY28-29 Budget Target (Webex 03:57:00)**

The BOC reviews the last four meetings to review what emerged as funding directions and priorities. The forecast table is included in the meeting packet. MMB staff shared optimistic news, as every quarter is performing better than expected for FY26. BWSR staff also revealed funds rolled back into the funds as well. This places the CWFs at \$342 million (versus the \$307 million previously projected).

- Steve Christenson: Why would the Council not use what MMB is forecasting as our target (\$342)? *Answer:* You can decide to use that. There will likely be a change in the budget as these are still forecasts. If you want to be conservative, the \$340 protects a little. Too much of a decrease can be impacting to the programs, versus smaller adjustments.
- Steve Besser: I would suggest \$340 as the target. It leaves about \$2.9 million for unknown adjustments.
- Warren Formo: When is the next date for an update from MMB? *Answer:* Between now and August, there should be a quarterly update. There will not be a new forecast until November.
- Warren Formo: Will the Governor be looking at \$342?
  - *Answer from Glenn Skuta, MPCA:* I think we will be moving forward with this number, at this time.
  - *Jen Kader:* The preliminary budget relies heavily on the February forecast. The November forecast will be different. The best the Council can do is be as close as possible to the final number, so the November is minor adjustments. Then, the new Governor will be reviewing it.
- *Motion to consider the target of \$340 million by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Steve Besser. No further discussion. Motion carries.*

### **Confirmation of Next Steps (Webex 04:08:00)**

There will be one spreadsheet that includes priorities and funding information, along with additional details to summarize them. This provides context as the Council continues to move forward on this process. Any additional comments or concerns?

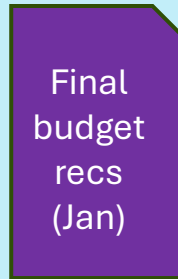
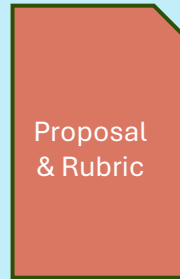
- Dick Brainerd: The CWFs have funded great programs. These are meaningful. New programs are important to consider too.
- *Jen will follow up with the Policy Committee on relevant items.*
- *Jen will follow up with public input, including creating a table summarizing public comments, in preparation for collecting public feedback of the CWFs at the June 15<sup>th</sup> full Council meeting.*

### **Adjournment (Webex 04:15:43)**

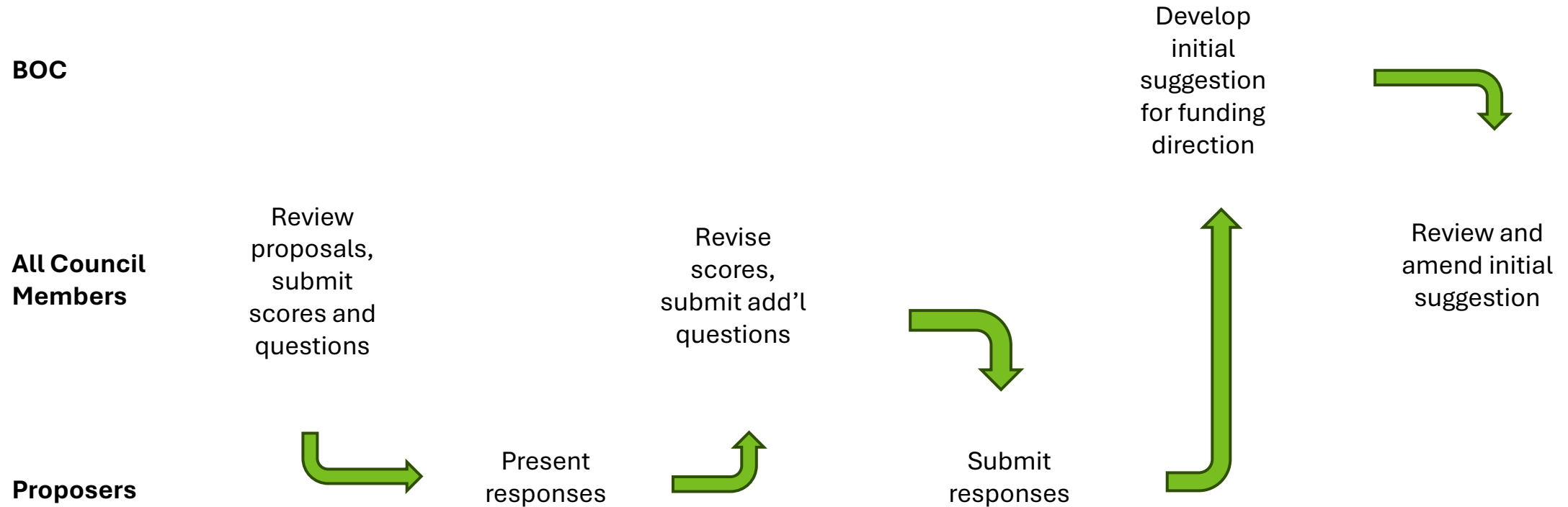
Input from previous 2 years

- Last budget cycle
- Strategy year convos
- Field Tour
- Surveys

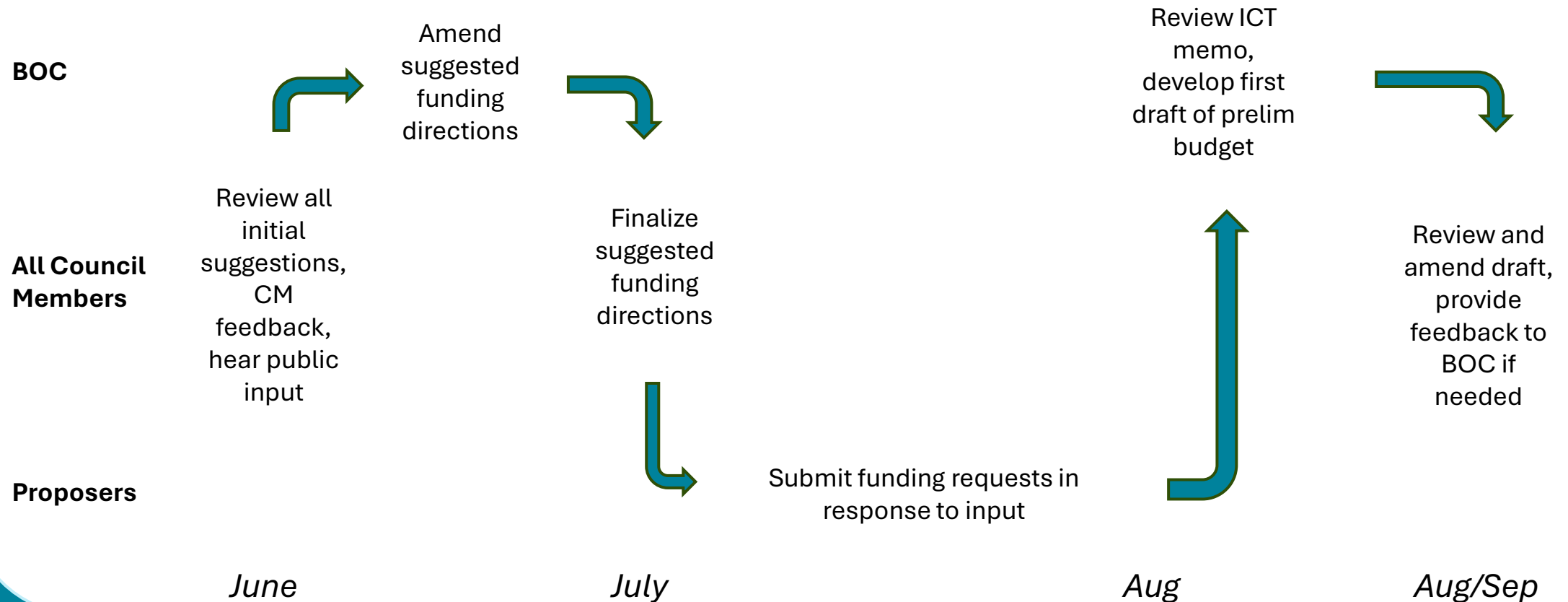
- Values
- Priorities



# Proposal Review Phase (x4, Feb-June)



# Preliminary Budget Development Phase



#	Program	Proposer	Brief Description	26-27 Amount	Proposed Change	Mean (Range)	BOC priority	BOC direction	Notes
46	CWC Administration	MPCA	This program funds the operation of the Clean Water Council and related expenses, including reimbursements, per diem, communications and engagement expenses, overhead, and staff.	\$922,000	Increase	43.8 (37-50)	High	Increase	Explore: what could be contracted vs. FTE? Support for FTE also.
18	Watershed Based Implementation Funds	BWSR	WBIF accelerates progress toward Minnesota's clean water goals by funding actions prioritized through local watershed and groundwater plans. This approach provides a <b>dependable, equitable funding source</b> that enables local and Tribal governments to target measurable outcomes and implement high-impact projects efficiently. By integrating local expertise with statewide data, <b>WBIF increases consistency, reduces administrative burden, and ensures resources are used where they achieve the most benefit.</b> Funded activities protect and restore surface waters, safeguard groundwater and drinking water sources, and improve water quality outcomes across diverse Minnesota watersheds.	\$88,100,000	Increase	43.6 (26-50)	High	Increase	Need to be realistic about how much is possible as a total.
40	Forever Green Initiative	MDA	The Forever Green Initiative (FGI) develops Minnesota-specific winter annual and perennial crops that provide continuous living cover to protect and restore surface and groundwater quality. Through integrated research, farmer adoption support, and market-building efforts, the program accelerates adoption of cropping systems that reduce nutrient loss, enhance soil health, and support farm profitability. Clean Water Fund support advances research, implementation, and partnerships that expand these crops across Minnesota's agricultural landscape. The program serves farmers, rural communities, and the public by promoting agricultural systems that deliver durable environmental and economic benefits.	\$5,000,000	Increase	43.3 (33-50)	High	Increase	Appreciation for leverage, split of interest in moderate or full increase. NRS connection.
36	Source Water Protection	MDH	Source water protection planning and implementation supports the efforts of local public water systems to identify issues that threaten their source of drinking water as well as opportunities and activities that help to protect it. Implementation of priority activities are supported with financial and technical assistance. Emerging water quality threats are identified through ambient monitoring of drinking water sources and finished water.	\$7,540,000	Increase	43.1 (35-50)	High	Increase	
33	WRAPS	MPCA	WRAPS Updates provide the scientific basis to LGUs for prioritizing and targeting watershed planning and implementation via 1W1P. WRAPS Updates can include, but are not limited to, stressor identification reports, TMDL reports, in-depth water body characterization, modeling, and enhanced studies, like lake protection reports. WRAPS Updates contain pollutant reduction and waterbody protection goals to guide the creation of a comprehensive watershed management plan and resulting protection and restoration implementation activities. WRAPS scientifically inform water quality permit programs to assist with appropriate level of regulation. Beyond the work the program does, MPCA's Watershed Program carries We Are Water for the CWC/CWF.	\$14,500,000	Hold Steady	43.1 (35-49)	High	Hold Steady	
17	One Watershed, One Plan	BWSR	The program funds evaluations and amendments of comprehensive watershed management plans developed through the One Watershed, One Plan program. The program supports voluntary, multi-jurisdictional partnerships among local and tribal governments to develop and implement prioritized, targeted, and measurable actions that protect and restore quality surface and groundwater. Plans guide use of state funds to high priority areas based on available data. By FY28-29, all initial 10-year plans will be complete. Maintaining plans through evaluation and amendments ensures plans stay relevant and useful, reflect new data, and engage local partners who were not part of the original planning process.	\$1,000,000	Hold Steady	43.1 (29-50)	High	Hold	
4	Legacy Partners	BWSR	The Clean Water Legacy Partners program funds implementation of high-priority projects that protect, enhance, and restore Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater, and drinking water sources. By advancing actions identified in state, local, and Tribal water management plans, the program delivers measurable water quality improvements in impaired and vulnerable waters. The program serves Tribal nations, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and local partners, expanding implementation capacity, strengthening collaboration, and ensuring Clean Water Fund investments reach diverse communities and priority waters statewide.	\$ 1,000,000	Increase	43.1 (27-50)	High	Increase	2 med

1	Surface and Drinking Water Protection Restoration (Projects and Practices)	BWSR	This project-specific competitive grant program provides Clean Water Funds to local governments to support the implementation of high priority surface and groundwater projects derived from state approved, locally adopted water management plans.	\$ 6,000,000	Increase	42.8 (36-49)	High	Increase	Drinking water impact, question of how high, 1 med
7	Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative	Olmsted County	This program will collaboratively address rising nitrate trends in groundwater on a regional scale by working with farmers to implement soil health practices on private land in SE MN where karst geology is prevalent and groundwater is susceptible to contamination. Protecting groundwater is imperative because it serves as our drinking water supply and sustains local industries and communities. Research confirms that converting traditional row crops to small grains, cover crops, and perennial hay and grazing systems reduces nitrate leaching, retains nitrogen, and limits erosion. The program could also be expanded statewide.	-	NEW	42.8 (34-50)		Merge	Interest in seeing continued conversations with BWSR. Maintain Olmsted innovations, possibly make competitive.
34	WRAPS	DNR	This program adds geomorphology, hydrology, and connectivity data to the WRAPS process and supports the Watershed Health Assessment Framework (WHAF), supplementing MPCA's biomonitoring and water chemistry data to promote robust watershed health assessments and bridge gaps in watershed science. MPCA and local water managers use DNR data to help identify root causes of water quality problems, compare restoration and protection strategies, and implement resilient, multiple-benefit solutions. The WHAF encourages resource managers, scientists, landowners, and others to explore extensive spatial data at nested watershed scales, without using desktop GIS. Users can save and share custom views, ecological health scores, and more.	\$4,750,000	Hold Steady	42.7 (33-50)	High	Hold Steady	
31	Private Well Initiative	MDH	The Private Well Initiative proposes a comprehensive approach to ensuring safe drinking water for the more than 1.1M Minnesotans who rely on private wells. Building on the work of existing state and local programs, the initiative improves understanding of contaminant occurrence in private wells; expands education, outreach, and technical assistance for well users; and strengthens partnerships with partners. The program increases public access to private well water quality data, develops model policies to better protect well users, is establishing a statewide well testing program, and supports targeted efforts to address nitrate contamination in southeast Minnesota.	\$6,000,000	Increase	42.6 (36-50)	High	Increase	
42	Stormwater Research Program	UMN	The program will lead to the development of new and revised stormwater practices and management techniques that are used on both public and private properties to prevent, minimize and mitigate the impacts of runoff to Minnesota's water resources. The program accomplishes this by investing the majority of the funds (~70%) into research through competitive or direct pass-through processes. Research is and will be conducted by a variety of Minnesota's academic institutions, public agencies, and private industry and by collaborations of all three. The program also provides technology transfer; training, outreach, and Extension education to Minnesota professionals, practitioners, and policy leaders.	\$1,600,000	Increase	42.3 (34-50)	High	Increase	1 hold steady. Interest in at least restoring to previous levels
59	River and Lake Monitoring and Assessment	MPCA	Minnesota monitors and assesses surface waters to meet Clean Water Act requirements and support water protection and restoration. The state evaluates water quality every two years, identifies impaired waters, and reports results to the U.S. EPA. Monitoring includes intensive watershed studies, trend and pollutant monitoring, and 10-year lake and stream assessments using physical, chemical, and biological data. The program coordinates partners, supports volunteer monitoring, manages and shares data, tracks long-term and climate trends, and produces reports and analyses to inform water quality management and policy.	\$18,900,000	Increase	42.3 (32-48)	High	Increase	Concern about degree of increase on such a large program. Support for nitrate sensor network.
3	Conservation Drainage (Multipurpose Drainage Management)	BWSR	This program provides financial and technical assistance to Minnesota's Public Drainage Authorities and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to facilitate planning, design, and installation of conservation practices on drainage systems that will result in water quality improvements. These practices promote retention of rainfall and runoff on the land, soil erosion reduction, and water quality improvement in drainage systems and receiving waters while maintaining agricultural production. The program is implemented through partnering with the state's public drainage system authorities, principally counties and watershed districts. The state's investment leverages local investment as the grants require a 10% local match.	\$ 2,000,000	Increase	42.3 (31-49)	High	Increase	

32	Chloride Reduction Program	MPCA	The MPCA Chloride Reduction program provides assistance, grants, training, and education & outreach to communities, permittees, and partner organizations to help reduce chloride at its source and protect water quality. Chloride is a permanent pollutant—it does not break down over time—so preventing it from entering the environment is the most effective and cost-efficient strategy for protecting both surface water and groundwater from chloride contamination.	\$1,300,000	Increase	42.1 (37-49)	High	Increase	2 members as hold steady (with one as potential increase), 1 medium. Connection to policy needs/ legislative action. Scale of challenge noted. Other state funding sources?
35	GRAPS	MDH	GRAPS serve an important purpose in the Water Management Framework aggregating existing state information and data to characterize groundwater and drinking water at a watershed scale. The information sharing begins with the generation of a GRAPS report providing the foundation of what is known regarding potential risks, monitoring data, along with the identification of strategies for LGUs to adopt to protect and restore groundwater and drinking water resources. Prior to the GRAPS initiative it was difficult for LGUs to obtain state agency data resulting in limited protection across the state.	\$3,500,000	Hold Steady	42.1 (36-48)	High	Hold Steady	Explore additional funding sources. One Increase.
6	Enhancing Landowner Adoption of Soil Health Practices for DW & GW Protection	BWSR	This program provides an opportunity for a large acre and participant increase in cover crop and soil health practice adoption. To reduce nitrate from leaching into our groundwater and running off into our surface waters, a shift in the cropping system is required. One component of this shift is the recommended use of cover crops to scavenge excess nitrogen from the soil. Cover crop adoption improves groundwater and surface water quality and benefits drinking water supply areas. Clean Water Funds will be made available to plant cover crops, provide payments to reduce risk, and purchase specialized interseeding equipment in one or two targeted areas within the state. This initiative can leverage existing NRCS financial assistance programs and will be implemented by SWCDs with partnership opportunities for Tribal governments.	\$ 9,486,000	Increase	42.1 (25-50)	High	Increase	
27	Nitrate in Groundwater	MDA	The MDA leads nitrate monitoring and reduction activities across Minnesota, with emphasis on areas with vulnerable groundwater. This work is done in partnership with the agricultural community and local governments. Funding supports activities that identify sources of nitrate contamination and evaluate and implement practices at the local level to reduce nitrate in groundwater. In addition to promoting, demonstrating, and encouraging adoption of fertilizer BMPs, the program engages in strategic efforts to increase vegetative cover in vulnerable areas; works with farmers and crop advisors in local advisory teams; conducts computer modeling to evaluate practices; monitors groundwater, provides technical support, and supports on-farm demonstration projects.	\$6,200,000	Increase	41.9 (35-48)	High	Increase	
22	Technical Assistance	MDA	The program helps to ensure accurate, scientific information is available to address water quality concerns in agricultural areas. Funding is used to evaluate conservation practices, demonstrate practices that protect water, share information about research and new technologies, and enhance outreach and education to the agricultural community and local partners. Technical assistance activities fill an important need for field demonstration and validation of practices to protect water quality. The MDA uses on-farm, edge-of-field monitoring to assess sediment and nutrient loss at the field scale and evaluate the effectiveness of conservation practices. These activities generate high-quality data and practical insights that inform WRAPS, 1W1P, as well as statewide models and decision-support tools.	\$3,200,000	Increase	41.7 (36-47)	High	Increase	
23	Native Mussel Restoration	DNR	Native freshwater mussels play a key role in contributing to clean waters in Minnesota. However, many mussel species are no longer present in sufficient numbers to repopulate rivers and streams. The DNR will use its expertise to propagate (grow) mussels and restore populations in Minnesota rivers. We propose to improve techniques and scale up production of mussel species and place them into their natural habitats. Funding will support collection, rearing, distribution, monitoring costs, and identification of new species and locations for restoration. These efforts will benefit Minnesotans by contributing to fishable and swimmable waters across the state.	\$700,000	Hold Steady	41.7 (30-49)	High	Increase	2 medium, 2 hold steady. Question of what capacity for increase there is.

38	County Geologic Atlas Part B	DNR	County Geologic Atlases provide information about the region's geology and groundwater: location and depth of aquifers, direction of water flow, pollution sensitivity, connections to surface waters, and other characteristics like natural quality and age of groundwater. This information is essential for local planning and environmental protection efforts. Water supply planning, source water protection, and well sealing programs are examples of local programs that need geologic and groundwater information. Other typical uses include providing information for permit applications, resource management, monitoring needs, and emergency response to contaminant releases.	\$200,000	Hold Steady	41.5 (26-50)	High	Hold Steady	1 med priority. DNR supports consistent funding with current capacity.
10	MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program	MDA	MAWQCP is a first-of-its-kind, voluntary initiative that supports the adoption of conservation practices on a field-by-field and whole-farm basis, whether the land is owned or rented. The program uses a comprehensive risk assessment process that evaluates every parcel and cropping scenario to identify and mitigate potential impacts to water quality. Producers work one-on-one with local agronomic and conservation professionals to assess risks and implement proven practices that protect water quality. This level of individualized, whole-farm evaluation and direct technical support is unmatched by any other program in the nation and provides a uniquely effective approach to protecting Minnesota's water resources.	\$ 7,000,000	Increase	41.5 (24-50)	High	50/50 Hold or Increase	3 med
44	Future of Drinking Water	MDH	This initiative arose from a 2016 Clean Water Council policy recommendation and companion appropriation. While the federal Safe Drinking Water Act provides a basic level of protection for customers of public water systems, this activity engaged local and national experts to develop an action plan that goes beyond current regulatory requirements to address emerging threats and ensure long-term safe public and private drinking water in Minnesota. With the release for the <i>Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan</i> in 2025, the initiative now focuses on implementing the Plan and providing regular updates on progress and where there are key risks to address.	\$500,000	Hold Steady	41.3 (33-49)	High	Hold Steady	
29	Enhanced SSTS Program Support	MPCA	This is critical funding that supports SSTS programs at the state and county levels. State staff provide technical assistance to counties and support compliance for some of the most difficult enforcement cases that counties ask the MPCA to take over. Base funding is provided to support County implementation of their local SSTS program requirements (M.S. 115.55) including issuing permits, conducting inspections, identifying, and resolving non-compliant SSTS, and revising and maintaining SSTS ordinances. Additional funding is made available to counties for grants to homeowners to repair or replace noncompliant SSTS (septic systems).	\$6,881,000	Increase	41.2 (35-50)	High	Increase	1 hold steady
53	Lake Biological Monitoring and Assessment (formerly Lake IBI)	DNR	The program supports MPCA and Federal Clean Water Act evaluations by conducting biological surveys and aquatic life assessments for lakes. Fish-based Indices of Biological Integrity were developed and used to evaluate fish communities in 1,056 lakes within 47 watersheds to identify impairments, stressors and exceptionally healthy lakes. Monitoring has expanded to 13 northwestern watersheds. Standards to assess coldwater fish habitat in over 500 lakes have been developed, with assessments beginning once rules are promulgated. The program serves Minnesotans by informing watershed protection and restoration efforts, and by monitoring conditions and trends statewide.	\$3,050,000	Hold Steady	41.2 (35-47)	High	Hold Steady	
51	Aquifer Monitoring for Water Supply Planning	DNR	The Minnesota DNR's groundwater monitoring program collects long-term aquifer level data through a statewide network of 1,257 observation wells. This program provides essential information on groundwater trends, sustainability, and groundwater-surface water interactions to protect drinking water, water supplies, and groundwater dependent ecosystems. By analyzing water level changes alongside climate, land use and water demand, the program supports planning that prevents water shortages and protects lakes, streams, wetlands, trout streams, and calcareous fens. The program serves state and local water managers, communities and resource professionals by supplying reliable data, modeling and shared tools for sustainable groundwater management.	\$4,700,000	Hold Steady	41.2 (33-50)	High	Hold Steady	
58	Drinking Water Contaminants of Emerging Concern	MDH	MDH advances science-based public health responses to contaminants of emerging concern by strengthening health-based guidance development, water analysis, and laboratory quality assurance. Health Risk Assessment develops drinking water guidance, conducts risk assessments, engages stakeholders, and collaborates with state and federal partners. The Public Health Laboratory develops analytical methods and improves detection at lower concentrations. The Minnesota Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program ensures that accredited laboratories performing analytical water testing are accountable to standards that support defensible and accurate data. Clean Water Funds protect human and ecological health amid evolving contaminant risks.	\$11,850,000	Hold Steady	41.2 (32-50)	High	Hold Steady	

49	Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) Program*	PFA	Through the Clean Water Council and the Clean Water Fund Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) framework, specific impaired and threatened water bodies are identified where pollutant reductions are needed to meet water quality standards. Watershed restoration and protection strategies are developed to guide implementation activities. The PSIG program provides grants to help municipalities construct wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water treatment projects when the Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) determines that higher levels of treatment are necessary to meet water quality goals. These include projects to meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements and water-quality-based effluent limits for phosphorus, chlorides, and other pollutants.	\$16,440,000	Hold Steady	41 (31-50)	High	Hold steady	
13	Working Lands and Floodplain Easements	BWSR	The program goal is to restore and protect riparian and floodplain areas across the state to improve and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat through limited term and perpetual easements with private landowners. The land targeted for this program is existing row crop agriculture within a riparian area or a mapped floodplain. Landowners have options to restore the easement to native vegetation or continue to generate income through uses that do not include row crop agriculture, with payment structure based on the proposed easement length and use.	\$ 2,000,000	Increase	41 (27-50)	High	Increase	
16	AgBMP Loan Program	MDA	This program provides low-interest loans (<3%) to farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses to implement BMPs that prevent, reduce, or eliminate a water pollution problem. The program is administered by local governments and has very low transaction costs; revolving loan repayments fund additional projects. Demand for AgBMP loans greatly exceeds available resources and additional funding would allow for expanded projects and practices that help protect and restore water quality.	\$ 4,000,000	Increase	40.7 (35-48)	High	Increase	
55	Stream Flow Monitoring	DNR	Stream flow information is essential for understanding the state of Minnesota's waters. Clean Water funding has allowed the DNR to expand the network of stream gages that support planning and implementation for clean water protection and restoration. Specifically, stream flow data are needed to calculate pollution loads for Total Maximum Daily Load studies and pollution reduction plans. Through the Legacy Amendment the DNR will continue to maintain at least one stream gage in each of the 81 major watersheds to provide water quantity information in support of the State's long term water quality trend monitoring efforts.	\$5,650,000	Hold Steady	40.7 (35-46)	High	Hold Steady	
50	Small Community Wastewater Treatment Program*	PFA	Minnesota has many areas with significant numbers of noncomplying septic systems in close proximity that are polluting surface waters and groundwater. Local governments interested in community solutions submit projects to MPCA for ranking on the Project Priority List based on the density and condition of existing systems. The program provides technical assistance grants to help communities evaluate potential alternatives and prepare a community assessment report which is submitted for review to MPCA, and construction financing (loans and grants) for projects when they are ready to proceed.	\$200,000	Hold Steady	40.7 (31-50)	High	Hold Steady	
60	Groundwater Assessment	MPCA	<p>reliable data on Minnesota's groundwater resources. Groundwater monitoring and assessment helps the MPCA, and its local and state partners, understand groundwater quality and investigate potential sources of contamination.</p> <p>The groundwater assessment program is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring and evaluating the presence and concentrations of non-agricultural pollutants, including contaminants of emerging concern;</li> <li>- Modeling the interaction between groundwater and surface water;</li> </ul>	\$2,000,000	Increase	40.5 (34-47)	High	Increase	question about whether the lapse of the PFAS Blueprint funding means the increase is a supplant. 3 hold steady.

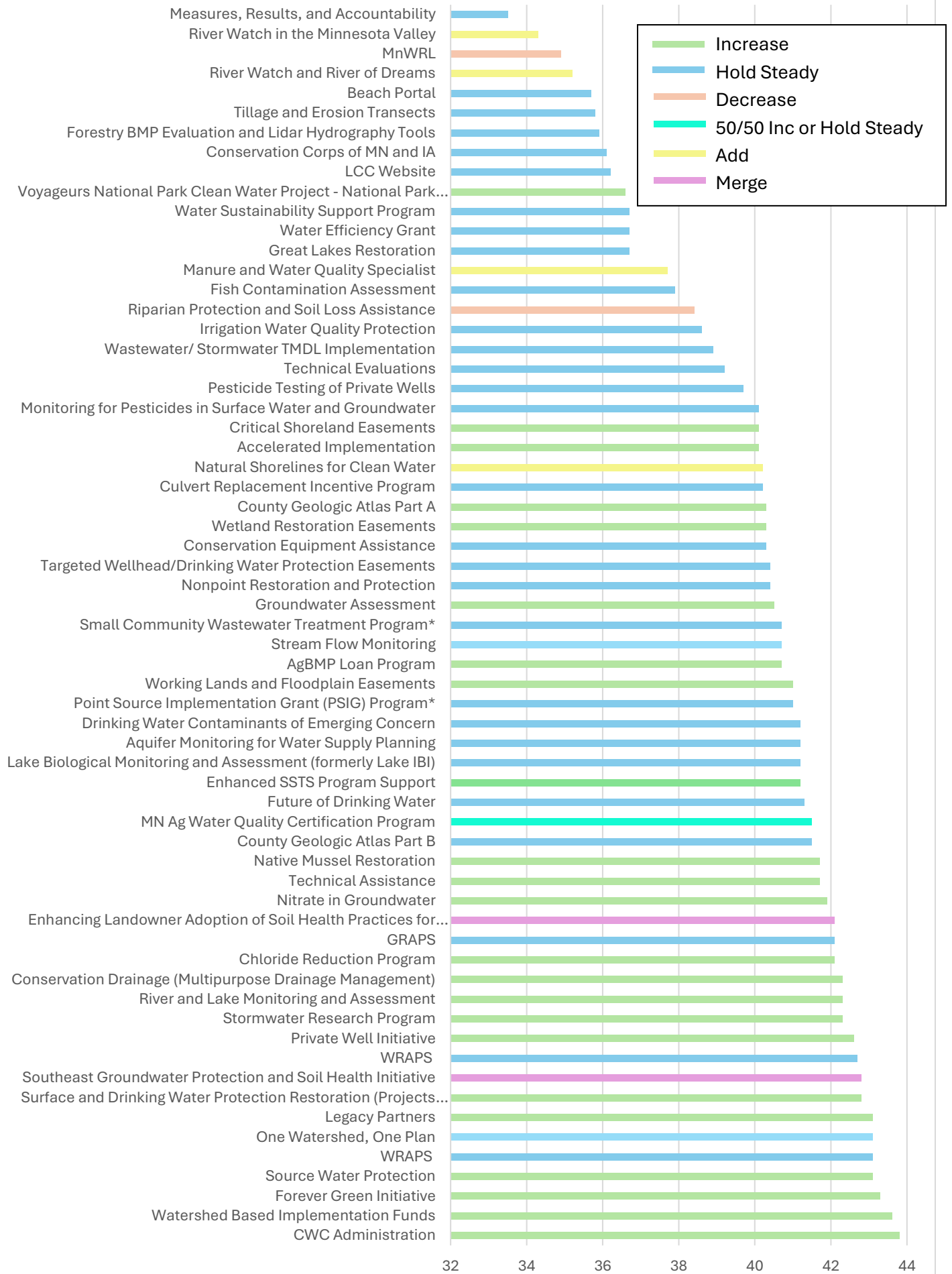
21	Nonpoint Restoration and Protection	DNR	This program supports the protection and restoration of water quality in streams and lakes through direct technical assistance, training, and tools to help local water managers prioritize, target, scope, design, construct or adopt recommended approaches, and quantify the anticipated and actual outcomes - from sediment and nutrient load reductions to multiple co-benefits. In partnership with other agencies and organizations, DNR Nonpoint staff work directly with local governments, local conservation groups, and landowners to help them compare implementation options and better understand approaches that address the root causes of water quality problems and improve watershed health.	\$4,350,000	Hold Steady	40.4 (33-47)	High	Hold	
14	Targeted Wellhead/Drinking Water Protection Easements	BWSR	The program goal is to ensure that the land use within a DWSMA is conducive to protecting or improving the drinking water that is impacted by the land use in areas that are vulnerable to contamination and protect the land via RIM easements or agreements with local units of government for fee title acquisitions.	\$ 5,000,000	Hold Steady	40.4 (28-48)	High	Hold Steady	
15	Conservation Equipment Assistance	MDA	This program supports MDA's Soil Health Financial Assistance Program (SHFAP), which provides grants to producers, producer groups, and local governments to purchase or retrofit equipment that promotes soil health practices. By expanding access to equipment for cover cropping, reduced tillage, managed grazing, and similar practices, the program improves soil structure, increases infiltration, and limits disturbance. These improvements directly protect water quality by reducing erosion and curbing sediment and nutrient runoff into Minnesota's waterways.	\$ 3,500,000	Hold Steady	40.3 (32-47)	High	Hold Steady	
12	Wetland Restoration Easements	BWSR	This program restores and permanently protects previously drained wetlands and adjacent uplands via RIM easements on private lands across the state for water quality and habitat benefits. The program utilizes a ranking and selection process and is locally implemented by SWCD staff. Restored wetlands benefit society by storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, serving as a carbon sink, and providing habitat.	\$ 5,000,000	Increase	40.3 (29-50)	High	Increase	
37	County Geologic Atlas Part A	UMN	connection of aquifers to the land surface and to surface water. Geologic atlases provide maps and databases that are essential for improved ground and surface water management.  This foundational data supports drinking water management, domestic and industrial supply, irrigation, and aquatic habitats. Atlases enhance education, provide technical assistance for management and regulation, and facilitate wise use of natural resources. They support permitting, land-use planning, wellhead protection, remediation, nutrient management,	\$800,000	Increase	40.3 (25-50)	High	Increase	1 med, 1 Hold Steady
9	Culvert Replacement Incentive Program	DNR	The program helps Minnesota communities modernize the state's more than 65,000 road-stream crossings by providing design expertise and funding natural channel and floodplain designs using the geomorphic approach. The program delivers three primary benefits. It ensures cleaner water by reducing soil erosion and allowing natural areas to filter pollutants. It supports healthier ecosystems by restoring fish passage and habitat. It also strengthens infrastructure, lowering maintenance costs and reducing the risk of washouts during floods. Ultimately, the program encourages local governments to adopt these high-performing designs as the standard for all future road projects.	\$ 2,800,000	Hold Steady	40.2 (30-50)	High	Hold Steady	Some appetite for more investment if capacity is there.
63	Natural Shorelines for Clean Water	DNR	We are proposing an integrated system to address the mounting challenges on Minnesota's most heavily used lakes. About half of Minnesota's natural shorelines have been altered or degraded, diminishing ecological function and lake water quality, as lawn-down-to-the-lake shorelines allow 7-9 times more pollutants to enter a lake than naturally vegetated shoreline. These pollutants accumulate in lakes, creating serious water quality problems. This proposal includes a Lake Steward program administered by Minnesota Lakes and Rivers and a lakeshore conservation easement program managed by Minnesota Land Trust for permanent protection of critical shoreland on popular lakes at risk for land use change. Another element of this overall effort will be submitted to the LCCMR to support a program to develop a certification and extension program for protection and restoration of natural shorelines.	NEW	NEW	40.2 (28-50)	High/Med	Fund	50/50 split on the priority level.
2	Accelerated Implementation	BWSR	This program is used to enhance the capacity of local governments to accelerate implementation of projects and activities that supplement or exceed current state standards for protection, enhancement, and restoration of water quality in lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. Activities include 1) increasing technical assistance through regional technical service areas (TSAs), 2) technical training and certification, 3) inventories of potential restoration or protection sites, and 4) developing and using analytical infrastructure of the agency such as the targeting tool Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) and eLINK as well as funding to local governments to support staff participation in training and increased capacity to deliver priority water quality projects.	\$ 8,700,000	Increase	40.1 (33-47)	High	Increase	3 Hold steady, 5 increase
11	Critical Shoreland Easements	BWSR	The program goal is to protect lands adjacent to public waters with good water quality but threatened with degradation. Using the RIM program, conservation easements are acquired to protect existing high quality shoreland areas. The highest priority areas are targeted through science-based conservation methods.	\$ 1,000,000	Increase	40.1 (31-50)	High	Increase	

56	Monitoring for Pesticides in Surface Water and Groundwater	MDA	Funding supports the purchase and maintenance of laboratory instruments that provide greater capacity for pesticide monitoring throughout the state. Clean Water funding allowed the MDA to increase the number of detectable pesticides, increase the sensitivity of detection of certain pesticides, and increase the overall number of samples analyzed on an annual basis. This expansion allowed the MDA to test additional public water supply wells, lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands, including samples collected on Tribal lands. Data generated support pesticide management decisions to ensure	\$740,000	Hold Steady	40.1 (29-47.5)	High	Hold Steady	
57	Pesticide Testing of Private Wells	MDA	This program provides homeowners and the public with information about pesticide occurrence in private drinking water wells located in geologically vulnerable areas. Earlier phases of the program analyzed up to 133 pesticide compounds in private wells across agricultural areas with vulnerable groundwater. Those results identified the herbicides cyanazine and atrazine--and their degradates--represent the greatest pesticide-related risks to private well users. Building on these findings, upcoming sampling will prioritize these compounds, along with nitrate and select neonicotinoid insecticides and fungicides in vulnerable aquifers, to ensure continued monitoring of contaminants most likely to affect groundwater quality.	\$1,000,000	Hold Steady	39.7 (22-48)	High	Hold Steady	
20	Technical Evaluations	BWSR	State law requires evaluations be conducted on restoration projects completed with funds from the Clean Water Fund (M.S. 114D.50). As provided by law, BWSR is the responsible agency for Clean Water Fund restoration evaluations. This proposal is a continuation of the required restoration evaluations that were initiated in 2012. These evaluations assess project performance to ensure and improve conservation outcomes across the state. DNR and BWSR elected to combine administration and reporting for three statutory requirements in a single Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluation program.	\$200,000	Hold Steady	39.2 (35-45)	Medium	Hold	2 high priority
48	Wastewater/ Stormwater TMDL Implementation	MPCA	Funding for these program areas advances point source water pollution reductions by supporting point source implementation work, notably 1) integrating the watershed approach and pollutant restrictions into point source stormwater and wastewater discharge permits; 2) incorporating stormwater and wastewater point source discharges into TMDL projects and watershed restoration and protection strategy (WRAPS) reports; 3) supporting technical assistance for wastewater and stormwater permittees in achieving pollutant reductions; and 4) creating more opportunity for water quality pollutant trades.	\$3,200,000	Hold Steady	38.9 (29-48)	High	Hold Steady	
26	Irrigation Water Quality Protection	MDA	Funding supports an irrigation water quality specialist through a contract with the University of Minnesota Extension to address water quantity and water quality issues in Minnesota's irrigated regions. The specialist conducts applied research, develops technical guidance and publications, provides education and outreach on irrigation and nitrogen BMPs, and contributes to the development of irrigation scheduling tools for Minnesota irrigators. Farmers, crop advisers, and SWCD staff benefit from expanded education, training, and direct technical support, and the practices help reduce nitrate leaching losses from irrigated crop production to groundwater.	\$310,000	Hold Steady	38.6 (24-48)	High	Hold	1 medium, like the prevention component. Small but mighty program.
19	Riparian Protection and Soil Loss Assistance	BWSR	This program supports soil and water conservation districts in providing technical assistance to landowners, conducting ongoing monitoring and compliance tracking, and assisting with local enforcement of the Minnesota buffer law. This work is the foundation of ongoing compliance with the buffer law and needed to fund the SWCD efforts prior to any handoff for potential enforcement by a county or watershed district (enforcement entities receive Riparian Aid not CWF dollars).	\$4,000,000	Hold Steady	38.4 (31-49)	Medium	Reduce	
52	Fish Contamination Assessment	DNR	The program analyzes fish tissue to detect mercury and other contaminants. The information collected is then used by the MPCA to determine whether lakes are impaired for these contaminants, and by MDH in establishing fish consumption advisories. Fish consumption advisories are for the Minnesota public to determine how much wild caught fish can be safely eaten from Minnesota waters.	\$1,100,000	Hold Steady	37.9 (29-46)	High	Hold Steady	Encouragement to look at game (ducks, geese, etc.)
45	Manure and Water Quality Specialist	MDA	Funding will support a manure land application and water quality specialist to develop and promote BMPs and update guidance, with a focus on regions at elevated environmental risk, including SE and Central Minnesota. Data from the USDA and MDA indicate that nutrients from manure are frequently under credited when farmers calculate the total amount of nitrogen applied to the crop, resulting in overapplication of commercial fertilizer. Improving manure crediting accuracy--and ensuring manure is applied at the right time, in the right place, in the right amount, and from the right source--will reduce nitrate leaching from manured fields to groundwater and decrease manure related runoff to surface water. The UMN's current manure program would benefit from additional staff capacity dedicated to land application technologies, producer support, and technical assistance. The position will strengthen statewide efforts to improve nutrient management, protect vulnerable water resources, and support farmers in implementing practical, science-based BMPs.	\$-	NEW	37.7 (16-46)	High	Fund	Likely starting around the same as the Irrigation Water Quality Specialist position.

24	Great Lakes Restoration	BWSR	This grant funding provides support to SWCDs in the Lake Superior Basin to leverage Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) or other federal Great Lakes funding to implement prioritized projects consistent with the GLRI's Action Plan, already identified through WRAPS, and Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans developed through 1W1P.	\$1,000,000	Hold Steady	36.7 (28-50)	Split H/M	Hold	1 increase
8	Water Efficiency Grant	MC	The program provides grants to assist municipalities in the 7 county Twin Cities metro area as they implement water demand reduction and water efficiency measures to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies and support resiliency of water suppliers. This program provides funding to residents in the region that currently get their drinking water from a municipality to purchase water efficient appliances which reduces the demand on ground and surface water sources. It also provides funds to communities that supply water to improve the efficiencies of their systems and facilities, also reducing water use and demand on our valued water resources.	\$ 1,400,000	Hold Steady	36.7 (27-43)	Medium	Hold Steady	
28	Water Sustainability Support Program	Met Council	The Twin Cities metro region's steady population growth, increased groundwater pumping, changing land use, and variable climate is challenging our ability to meet demands for current and future water supply. This program supports efforts and programs to: ensure supplies of potable water are adequate for the region's current and future population, protect and enhance surface water quality, ensure uninterrupted economic growth and prosperity, avoid conflict over water sustainability, foster collaboration to address regional water challenges and limitations, conduct investigations into groundwater and surface water interaction, looks at ways to minimize impacts from this on both our drinking water and surface waters, and support the residents of the metropolitan area.	\$2,750,000	Hold Steady	36.7 (23-45)	Medium	Hold	2 high priority
30	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project - National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Voyageurs National Park Clean Water JPB	These projects protect and restore water quality at the primary public access points to Minnesota's only national park and the nation's only water-based national park. FY28-29 funding of \$7,400,000 will support implementation of sanitary sewer system expansions, system upgrades and planning efforts, and related water quality protection infrastructure in remaining high-risk areas adjacent to Voyageurs National Park and downstream waters connected to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The proposed projects reduce nutrient loading, pathogen contamination, and groundwater degradation while protecting drinking water, recreational waters, and nationally significant aquatic resources.	\$1,500,000	Increase (\$7,400,000)	36.6 (20-45)	High	Increase	Caution about increasing to the 7.4M amount. Support of an increase of some amount though.
47	LCC Website	LCC	The LCC has been tasked with developing and maintaining a website that shows how revenues generated by the Legacy Amendment and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund are utilized. It is required by law.	7000	Hold Steady	36.2 (15-50)	High	Hold Steady	Required by law.
25	Conservation Corps of MN and IA	BWSR	Since 2012, BWSR has contracted with CCMI for delivery of services (restoration, maintenance, training, and other activities) to provide additional capacity to Minnesota's local governments. This funding request also includes delivery of service to provide additional capacity to Tribal nations. Prior to FY26-27, the funding was legislatively directed in appropriation language and previously used Surface and Drinking Water Protection/Restoration Grants or Accelerated Implementation funding sources.	\$1,500,000	Hold Steady	36.1 (26-50)	Medium	Hold	2 high
54	Forestry BMP Evaluation and Lidar Hydrography Tools	DNR	The <b>Guideline Monitoring Program</b> monitors the implementation of forest management guidelines (FMGs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) at logging sites across Minnesota's forested watersheds. We analyze data on FMG/BMP implementation to identify risks to water quality and provide training and advising for forest managers and loggers to implement sustainable forestry practices. The <b>Lidar Hydrography Program</b> generates Minnesota's official statewide elevation data through lidar technology, enabling precise mapping of the state's landscape features that influence surface water movement and infiltration to groundwater. Specializing in 3D data collection and terrain analysis, the team develops authoritative digital contours, elevation models, hydrography, and watershed boundaries.	\$1,400,000	Hold Steady	35.9 (14-47)	High	Hold Steady	3 mediums. Interest in having GF pay. Could have tighter tie to clean water outcomes.

43	Tillage and Erosion Transects	BWSR	The Tillage and Erosion Transects survey is a comprehensive, long-term program to systematically collect data on high residue cropping systems and cover crop adoption to produce county, watershed, and statewide estimates of soil erosion caused by water and wind. This valuable information can then be used by local and Tribal government staff to help them reach their water quality goals by using the information to both identify critical areas, and to select and prioritize potential projects based on a more accurate estimate of projected impacts.	\$850,000	Hold Steady	35.8 (12-45)	High	Hold Steady	
41	Beach Portal	MDH	Beach monitoring determines if beach water is safe for recreational activities and minimizes the risk of waterborne illnesses. Funding from the 2024-2025 CWFs established Minnesota Beach Portal (launching summer 2026), the first centralized source for statewide beach monitoring results and trends. This proposal will optimize the portal through evaluating and expanding its functionality, ensuring Minnesotans can access beach alerts for anywhere in the state. This proposal aligns with the vision of the Clean Water Council that Minnesota will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state. Furthermore, it makes Minnesota aware of crucial issues impacting water quality.	\$600,000	Hold Steady	35.7 (15-46)	Medium	Hold Steady	1 low, 1 high
61	River Watch and River of Dreams	Red River Board	The Red River Basin River Watch (RW) and River of Dreams (ROD) programs provide hands-on watershed education for K-12 students across the Red River of the North Basin. The programs connect youth to local rivers through field-based learning, water quality monitoring, and creative exploration. Their purpose is to build environmental literacy and stewardship by increasing understanding of non-point source pollution, its impacts, and key watershed health concepts. By engaging students, educators, and communities, the programs support improved water quality awareness, long-term protection of MN's waters, and development of the next generation of informed watershed stewards.	NEW (\$350,000)	NEW	35.2 (17-48)	High	Fund	Question if this should be funded directly or if it would be a grant program within the MPCA, who has directed funding to them in the past when the legislature directed it. Or BWSR Com \$\$.
39	MnWRL	MDA	The Minnesota Water Research Digital Library (MnWRL) is a user-friendly, searchable inventory of water research relevant to Minnesota. It provides access to peer-reviewed articles, technical reports, and CWF-supported documents, including MPCA WRAPS, and BWSR 1W1P reports. MnWRL enables water managers, researchers, and residents to easily find and share research information that informs science-based decisions to protect, conserve, and restore Minnesota's water resources. By centralizing thousands of publications, MnWRL improves transparency, reduces duplication, and accelerates adoption of BMPs statewide.	\$100,000	Decrease	34.9 (26-45)	High	Decrease	(Update to application: MDA supports decrease for this program).
62	River Watch in the Minnesota Valley	Friends of the Minnesota Valley	River Watch is a hands-on learning program operated by Friends of the Minnesota Valley for students in 28 high schools and in some middle schools during the 2025-2026 school year. Beginning with an in-classroom lesson aligned with state Science standards, students make 2 trips per semester to a river or stream to conduct water quality monitoring using a multi-function electronic probe and other tools. Macroinvertebrate surveys are conducted during the stream visits. Data is reported through the MPCA Citizen Science Portal. Most work is in the Minnesota River Basin, two High Schools serving Latino and Indigenous students in Minneapolis participate.	NEW (\$150,000)	NEW	34.3 (17-48)	High	Fund	Likewise would want to see this overseen by a state agency. Need to explore what this would look like.
5	Measures, Results, and Accountability	BWSR	This funding provides the required oversight and accountability for the Clean Water Funds that MN Board of Water & Soil Resources administers to measure, track, and communicate the results of projects, ensuring effective and high-quality investments of funds with measurable water quality results. Central to these efforts is eLINK, the agency's grant management system, which features grants tracking from application to reporting, contract management, and tracking of outcomes, including pollution reduction estimates. BWSR also administers a grant reconciliation process, through which staff conduct field visits with grant recipients to ensure compliance with state policies, guidance and fiscal best management practices.	\$ 2,500,000	Increase	33.5 (12-44)	High	Hold Steady	3 inc (1 moderate), 2 med

### Programs by mean average evaluation score, ascending



Agency	Program	Constituency	Commenter	Comment summary notes
BWSR	Conservation Drainage Management and Assistance	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment (\$3.5M) to continue to modify existing drainage infrastructure for improved environmental performance while maintaining agricultural productivity.
BWSR	Legacy Partners Grant Program	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment for the Legacy Grants program, specifically as it relates to grants to Tribal partners.
BWSR	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	There are too many easement programs. Must be tied to Landscape Stewardship Plans and 1W1P. These need to be permanent and need consistent rates. Lots of training and overhead. "Working lands" needs strict criteria.
BWSR	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment in Critical Shoreline (\$6M), Wetland Restoration (\$6M), and Floodplain (\$4M) easement programs.
BWSR	MULTIPLE	Watershed Districts	Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District	BWSR Clean Water Fund administration is not aligned with governing watershed statutes as to what is eligible for coverage in grants, loans and other reimbursable costs for WATERSHED PROJECTS, including preliminary scientific work performed by Civil Engineers to identify and evaluate best projects to meet prioritized, targeted, and measurable criteria. We ask the Clean Water Council to provide for reimbursement of all costs to date not covered by BWSR for these activities due to a structured rule denying access – for all Watershed Districts.
BWSR	Soil Health	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	Given the leverage of federal funding, TNC recommends that this program be adjusted to include more performance standards for each participating entity.
BWSR	Tillage and Erosion Survey Project	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends this program be modified to evaluate efficacy of multiple soil health and technical assistance programs across MN with improved coordination and data sharing.
BWSR	WBIF	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	With all 81 watersheds on track to have approved 1W1P management plans, continued support for a robust WBIF program is critical. This allows local governments to implement the highest-priority projects identified in their state-approved plans.
BWSR	WBIF	Counties	Local Government Roundtable	WBIF is the mechanism that will deliver on the investments and long-term vision established by the Clean Water Council, building on years of planning, monitoring, and data collection by turning those investments into on-the-ground action. This program is working as intended, and planning is nearly done across the whole state. Value is already being seen for the planning, and WBIF is the funding stream that makes implementation possible. Legacy amendment recognized role of local leadership in implementation. Sustained funding is requested.
BWSR	WBIF	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends that the Council add requirements for standardized reporting for watershed-based implementation funding across Minnesota.
BWSR	WBIF	SWCD	East Otter Tail and Wadena SWCDs	Respectfully urge the CWC to maintain and ideally increase funding for WBIF, one of the most effective and efficient mechanisms MN has for delivering measurable water quality improvements on private lands. Builds on the locally-led watershed-based approach that aligns local governments, state agencies, and stakeholders around shared watershed priorities based on sound science, local knowledge, and concerns. This reduces duplication and improves targeting of resources. WBIF becomes on-the-ground conservation to improve and protect water quality. These funds are heavily leveraged by local partners and often serve as a catalyst. Increasing WBIF funding would allow more high-priority projects to move forward and accelerate measurable progress. WBIF success is also rooted in trust. Stable and reliable funding is necessary to sustain long-term watershed progress. Funding instability slows progress, disrupts partnerships, and reduces effectiveness. WBIF has allowed EOT SWCD to increase in cost share from 15 projects and \$39,000 in 2019 to 72 projects and nearly \$330,000 invested. Wadena SWCD has seen similar increases, demonstrating how WBIF has enabled SWCDs to dedicate staff time to priority efforts. More projects are being implemented, larger benefits are being achieved, and plan priorities are being translated into measurable conservation outcomes.
BWSR	WBIF	SWCD	Local Government Roundtable	WBIF is the mechanism that will deliver on the investments and long-term vision established by the Clean Water Council, building on years of planning, monitoring, and data collection by turning those investments into on-the-ground action. This program is working as intended, and planning is nearly done across the whole state. Value is already being seen for the planning, and WBIF is the funding stream that makes implementation possible. Legacy amendment recognized role of local leadership in implementation. Sustained funding is requested.
BWSR	WBIF	Watershed Districts	Local Government Roundtable	WBIF is the mechanism that will deliver on the investments and long-term vision established by the Clean Water Council, building on years of planning, monitoring, and data collection by turning those investments into on-the-ground action. This program is working as intended, and planning is nearly done across the whole state. Value is already being seen for the planning, and WBIF is the funding stream that makes implementation possible. Legacy amendment recognized role of local leadership in implementation. Sustained funding is requested.
DNR	Native Mussels	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment (\$2M) to support integration with watershed implementation activities and advance MN's long-term goal of restoring and protecting aquatic ecosystems.
DNR	Nonpoint Source Restoration and Protection Activities	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC considers this a model implementation program, and recommends increased investment (\$6M).

MDA	AgBMP Loans	Business	First Farmers & Merchants Bank	Helps our farm customers with low interest money to be able to replace structures, purchase equipment and fix-up facilities to help reduce runoff, reduce soil erosion and help maintain a more ecological friendly environment. Well over 100 loans for multiple millions of dollars. Only complaint is there isn't enough money to help everyone who is interested. Backlog currently through 2027.
MDA	AgBMP Loans	SWCD	Fillmore SWCD	Essential financing tool for water quality efforts. SE MN especially vulnerable. Continued investment in education, technical assistance, and financial assistance will protect drinking water, improve soil health, and support farm profitability.
MDA	AgBMP Loans	SWCD	Rock SWCD	Wait list of 22 that have applied for \$2.3M with 2026 repayments at ~\$480,000. Long wait time to be funded with current rate. Demand high thanks to low interest. Additional funds requested.
MDA	Conservation Equipment Assistance	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends continued investment given high ROI for cost per acre of soil health practice implemented.
MDA	Conservation Equipment Assistance	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	The Soil Health Financial Assistance Program is an innovative approach to reducing risk in implementing new practices. This is a budget priority for us.
MDA	Forever Green	Business	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	Friends of the Mississippi River	FGI is a nationally respected research effort to design new, economically viable "Continuous Living Cover" cropping systems. It aligns with the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (which has CLC as a pillar of success) and drinking water protection goals, as well as the Council's own strategic plan. Leverages additional funding 7:1, and sustained investment is needed to scale up acreage.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	<b>94 individuals through Every Action (see other tab)</b>	Forever Green is an internationally respected research and commercialization effort designed to develop new, perennial crops and winter annual crops (cover crops) that protect our environment while enhancing farm prosperity. Forever Green crops greatly improve water quality, soil health, habitat and climate resilience, while helping farmers and our rural economy thrive. Please designate as high priority and deserving of an increase.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	Mary Tkach (FMR Every Action)	Please designate as high priority and deserving of an increase. I worked on public health and environment throughout my life. The public has the desire and you have the power to make a very positive impact. Help us move FGI forward.
MDA	Forever Green	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends continued investment to enable scalable outcomes.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Carmen Fernholz	As a farmer I was one of the early collaborators with FGI and have watched it evolve over 15 years. Because of the issues and challenges to ag that this research is working at solving, continued support through research dollars is critical. Long-term research is needed, and the results sometimes take a while to become known. Living in western MN I see quite vividly the need for CLC to protect our soil and water. As a farmer I see this as one of the most viable means to introduce a third crop and create a more robust financial safety net. Please increase funding to assure viability for the future.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Ben Penner	I grow CLC crops on my farm and operate a custom farming operation planting CLC for my neighbors. These are a win-win-win: we can increase our level of entrepreneurship while reaching environmental goals and making our farms more productive. CWF support is crucial right now due to rising costs of research and uncertainty of federal funding. Please increase funding support.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	New markets for oats and CLC crops, as well as farmer learning and supply chain development, are needed to accelerate adoption. This is a budget priority for us.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.
MDA	Forever Green	Farmers	Land Stewardship Project	Support increased funding for the FGI. Previous funding has been instrumental, especially for key programs like the Environmental and Economic Clusters of Opportunity (ECCO) program that help de-risk these crops. Need to scale these crops across the state and region.
MDA	Forever Green	SWCD	Community Letter of Support for Forever Green	Nutrient Reduction Strategy notes central role of Continuous Living Cover in meeting long-term water quality goals. CWC support of funding has been longstanding and prescient. The work is reaching a critical inflection point and continued support is needed. FGI is internationally recognized, and CLC crops provide multiple benefits. FGI invests in farmers of today and crops of tomorrow, along with supply chain development. Successfully breeding and commercializing new crops requires dedicated researchers and supply chain specialists, so long term funding is needed.

MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Anthony Brusa, UMN	As a recipient of the most recent round of Forever Green funding, your support is allowing my team to move forward with development of a genomic resource that will greatly accelerate the development of new agronomic traits for Forever Green crops. By more rapidly identifying novel genetic variants, our tools will enable large scale screenings of important traits without needing a large amount of field space for our work. This work will benefit plant development efforts, bringing us closer to adoption of winter oilseed crops for Minnesota growers. This support comes at an important time as costs rise and federal funding has been sharply cut. Please consider an increase to further enable funding of agronomic research in pursuit of cleaner waters for people in Minnesota.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Hannah Rusch, UMN	As a researcher, it is exciting to see all that has been made possible through state funding of the FGI. This summer I will be starting a new project looking to build and compile knowledge of how three FGI winter annuals crops impact water quality in SE MN when incorporated into corn/soybean rotation. Urge you to continue to advance FGI work to the benefit of the environment, rural livelihoods, and entrepreneurship in our state.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Erin Meier, Green Lands Blue Waters, UMN	CLC agriculture is particularly important for addressing water quality concerns, reducing nitrate leaching and soil erosion. MN's 2026 Nutrient Reduction Strategy states its importance to achieving MN's clean water goals. FGI's research infrastructure is at the core of this. Environmental urgency is meeting funding urgency. We are at a critical time as we create productive ag systems that nurture and provide opportunity rather than extract.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Jim Anderson, UMN	CWF support has been essential to the progress FGI has made, advancing new CLC species from early development to commercialization. At the same time, research costs continue to increase and federal funding has become increasingly uncertain. Maintaining momentum and expertise requires stable and expanded state investment. Respectfully encourage an increase in funding.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Bekah Schulz, UMN	Desire for the CWC to continue and increase funding for the FGI. Your support has allowed this work to happen, and continued support is needed now more than ever as research costs increase.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Maciej Kazula, UMN	FGI's progress in developing CLC crops would not have been possible without the sustained support of the CWF. Winter oilseeds fill a critical gap in row-crop systems by providing cover when soils are most vulnerable to erosion and nutrient loss. They keep nutrients out of MN waters and support pollinators. They do not compete with food crops. Additional funding is needed as research costs rise and federal funding becomes uncertain.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Grace Doyle, UMN	I am a PhD student working with FGI to ease agronomic barriers to the adoption of CLC systems. CWF Support has been instrumental to the accomplishments FGI has made in the sustainable agriculture sector. With the rising cost of research and high uncertainty around federal funding, the past 1.5 years have been challenging for sustainable agriculture research at a time when it is more important than ever. Increasing funding would make an impactful difference to the progress we can make in addressing water quality and soil health challenges connected to agricultural practices.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Cesar Medina, UMN	I analyze data for our alfalfa breeding projects. Alfalfa is incredibly valuable for its high forage quality and its direct and positive impact on watershed health. The costs associated with acquiring and translating this data into actionable decisions has risen significantly. An increase in funding would allow us to accelerate solutions across FGI's diverse crops. Thank you for your ongoing support.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Amy Teller, UMN	I do social science research on CLC systems, meaning I learn from growers, value chain businesses, and other partners about how CLC crops fit into and forward the visions they have for this work and communities. My work helps FGI continually improve how they advance CWC agriculture and be accountable and responsive to the people supporting and adopting these crops. Federal funding uncertainty makes state funding even more crucial. Encourage an increase in funding so CLC can be advanced more rapidly and responsibly.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Professor Jessica Gutknecht, UMN	I have been heavily engaged in FGI for the last 10 years. In that time I've seen how much advancement of novel, environmentally friendly cropping systems, and the university capacity to support them, has been made possible by your support. Thank you! With many funding sources at risk and with recent developments in FGI cropping system advancement, now is a great time to support increased funding for the initiative.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Madeleine Luskey, UMN	It's been incredibly encouraging to see compounding interest in building markets for CLC crops. As market interest grows, two things remain crucial: the foundational R&D at the heart of FGI and supporting farmer adoption of these crops. Public support is more important than ever as research funding becomes scarce. Ask that you increase funding for FGI.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. George Annor, Food Science Undergrad Program, UMN	My research focuses on development of food products and markets that encourage adoption of crops that reduce nutrient losses and protect MN's waters. Increased funding for FGI is needed as research costs rise and federal funding becomes more uncertain. Additional support would allow us to expand and accelerate the program.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Walid Sadok, UMN	My research focuses on improving freezing tolerance in perennial and winter-hardy crops, something necessary for CLC in Minnesota. Research costs have increased substantially and there is growing uncertainty for federal funding. Sustained and increased support is needed at this time and help us shorten the timeline from research and discovery to on-farm adoption.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Fernanda Dias, UMN	My research helps create new food and ingredient markets that can improve the economic viability of these environmentally beneficial crops. Continued support is particularly important now as research costs have increased and federal funding is more uncertain. This makes it hard to sustain long-term innovation programs. Additional funding could accelerate the development of value-added products, expand pilot-scale validation, and more. Respectfully encourage an increase in funding.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Chase Krug, UMN	My work focuses on helping to move silflower (a perennial oil seed crop) closer to commercial viability while maintaining the environmental benefits associated with perennial agriculture. Research costs have increased and federal funding is uncertain. Increased funding could allow us to accelerate the breeding process, expand field evaluations, and more, helping to advance the goals of CLC ag.

MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Senyu Chen, UMN	My work focuses on the interaction between soybean cyst nematode (SCN) and pennycress. Pennycress is being developed as a winter oil seed for MN, with strong potential for environmental benefit. However, pennycress is a host for SCN, the most destructive pest for soybean. It is critical to understand how to scale up pennycress without this potential impact. More research is needed, but costs are increasing and the number of projects within the FGI continue to increase. Additional funding for the FGI is requested.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Frank Forcella, retired USDA and UMN professor	Past CWC support has been critical to FGI. CLC crops are extremely useful for preventing soil erosion and enhancing water quality. Attraction for pollinating insects is also clear. The novel FGI ag systems contribute positively to the environment while maintaining or enhancing economic outcomes for farmers and food/feed suppliers. Sustainable aviation fuel as well, which is becoming increasingly of interest. MN can lead the nation in developing perennial field crops. FGI's past success more than justifies enhanced funding for this work.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Matthew Ott, UMN	Public funding of research into finding solutions for challenges related to rural economies, clean lakes and streams, fuel prices, and climate change is a bit tight these days, but there is a lot of bang for the buck in terms of the private sector also making investments in parallel to public teams working on this research. Please consider increasing support.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Christopher Sherve, UMN	Sustained support from the CWC has been foundational to the progress we have made with CLC agriculture across MN. My work focuses on breeding improved varieties of Winter Camelina and Pennycress as winter cover crops. These crops offer farmers a new revenue stream while reducing runoff, improving soil health, and providing early season habitat alongside primary cash crops. These are also strong candidates for feedstocks and sustainable aviation fuel. We are at a critical juncture. Increased funding would allow us to advance these crops and support adoption of these practices.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Professor Robert Stupar, UMN	Thank you for past support of FGI. This program is valuable to the future of the agricultural economy and ecological conservation of our state. I'm a researcher involved for several years in the development of winter annual and perennial crops for MN farmers. Particularly excited about how these crops can reduce erosion and protect waterways. More work is needed, and federal support for this type of research has suffered vast reductions. An increased budget would be a game changer for research and results delivered to the state.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Cora Gertjeanssen	Thank you for past support. The cost of research is increasing, and research and development are essential to Forever Green's work. Increased uncertainty around federal funding makes CWF support that much more valuable. With more resources we could fund more projects and accelerate progress. Please consider an increase.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture	Thank you for the ongoing support the CWC has provided. The funding supports important research and demonstration work, outreach and incentives for farmers. Please continue to provide this important funding!
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Dr. Yesuf Assen Mohammed	Thanks to CWF support, interest in winter oilseed crops has grown significantly among stakeholders, including industry partners, policymakers and agricultural organizations. This growing attention reflects the tremendous potential of these crops to deliver agronomic, economic and environmental benefits. Despite this progress, we are facing significant challenges in securing federal funding. Continued and increased support from the CWF is critical and would have a substantial impact on outcomes.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Jake Jungers, UMN	The research model developed by FGI is the most impactful I've seen. Colleagues around the country are blown away by the Clean Water Council and MN's commitment to innovative agriculture and water conservation. Thank you! Additional funding is needed to account for decreased federal funding. CWF support gives MN researchers a leg-up against the competition, making now an ideal time to increase FGI funding.
MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Ann Kirby, UMN	This work isn't happening in this way anywhere else. Thank you! Circumstances have changed in recent years--federal research landscape is far more constrained and farmers are facing mounting challenges. CWF support is critical to advancing solutions. Additional funds could help expand and deepend research, increase farmer adoption, and provide technical assistance. Request increase.
MDA	Forever Green		Beth Dooley	As a James Beard Award winning food writer and cookbook author, I have engaged with FGI CLC by writing cookbooks with recipes and stories about the impact of these crops on our ecosystem, our health, our rural communities, and in addressing food insecurity and food justice. These foods are delicious and nutritious and their impact on clean water cannot be understated. Given the rising cost of research and uncertainty around federal research funding the support from CWF is extremely important. With more funding, we'll see more of these foods in our stores and in our kitchens.
MDA	Forever Green		Tammy Kimbler	Live in the Minnehaha Creek and Mississippi watersheds. The Councils support for Forever Green is critical to the future of agriculture and the watersheds it relies on and empties into throughout the state. My work at The Land Institute to advance continuous living cover crops would not be possible without our partnership with Forever Green. Encourage you to increase FGI funding so farmers have more viable alternatives that benefit and protect our waters.
MDA	MAWQCP	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends the program provide more information on water quality outcomes at the watershed scale and describe improvements link to the program. Increase technical assistance within the private sector of trusted advisors.
MDA	MAWQCP	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	MFU strongly supports voluntary incentives and MDA's MAWQCP. This is a budget priority for us.
MDA	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	AgBMP Loans and Conservation equipment assistance should be combined.
MDA	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC emphasizes importance of capacity investments within agricultural programs, including funding for new MDA positions focused on advancing manure BMPs, nutrient management, and producer support.
MDA	MULTIPLE	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	Over the past year, Minnesota has lost approximately one third of its NRCS staff. Supporting local technical assistance, such as that provided through the MDA's MAWQCP, is essential for both maintaining and increasing agricultural conservation practices across the landscape. This is a budget priority for us.

MDA	Forever Green	UMN	Lois Braun, UMN	Our work with hazelnuts would not happen without the support through the FGI. More than a quarter comes from FGI grants. The rest is multi-state, multi-institutional federal funding, which is becoming more competitive. Proposal writing is time intensive—chasing down fewer federal dollars is time not spent doing the research. Additional funding is needed to support staff, research, testing, and equipment.
MDH	Contaminants of Emerging Concern	MDH	Jane de Lambert, Environmental Health Supervisor	The Drinking Water Ambient Monitoring Program and Contaminants of Emerging Concern Program have worked together on pesticide and PFAS analysis at public water systems. This monitoring helps ensure users of public water systems have safe drinking water by understanding both source water and finished water (and the efficacy of treatment systems then to remove emerging contaminants). If the CEC program did not exist there would be a notable gap in our ability to assess threats to drinking water.
MDH	GRAPS	SWCD	Sherburne SWCD	In this most recent round of CWF funding, we have received heartfelt gratitude from township boards and residents who appreciate our continued efforts to promote education and awareness in their communities. This funding lets us reach those we hadn't yet and strengthen relationships, leading to countless conversations about drinking water quality and what's needed to safeguard it. CWF is helping us meet growind demand and support healthy waters and local communities.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	Counties	Dodge County	We have worked with MDH on a variety of groundwater-related initiatives over the years, supporting implementation related to goals in the Dodge County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Greater Zumbro River Watershed Plan, and the Cedar-Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Most recently, the PWI has provided valuable funding for private well testing, developing a well inventory, and enhance our understanding of local groundwater quality and drinking water supply. This is helping us effectively target limited resources to areas of greatest need, providing a strong foundation for informed decision making and future protection efforts.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	Counties	Olmsted County	We've worked with the PWI since 2021 to provide water testing services across SE MN. We support providing an avenue to ensure that private well owners have access to local and economical testing options to give peace of mind as they draw from their tap. Through the PWI, we developed TAP-IN Safe Drinking Water Program and maintain a collaborative of SWCDs, local public health, and environmental services staff across 9 SE MN counties. In the two rounds of funding, have offered testing to hundreds of households and offered one-on-one consultation to connect users to resources to address issues. When testing exceeds limits, the program assists with funding for mitigation for those experiencing financial hardship. Additional funding to support the State's workplan to address nitrate contamination of drinking water has allowed the TAP-IN collaborative to provide free water testing to 2,580 households and provide mitigation support to hundreds of users, of which 280 have been referred to MDA's program to receive a free water treatment system. We ask continued support for PWI to expand current programming.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Fillmore SWCD	PWI program helps to ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota. In SE MN nitrate continues to be a significant conver for private well users. Funding through this initiative helps us connect residents with testing, education, technical assistance, and resources that directly support public health and groundwater protection. Continue to support the PWI and related drinking water protection efforts.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Root River SWCD	The PWI helps the Root River SWCD ensure drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota. With MDH, we completed Township Nitrate Testing to pinpoint high nitrate areas in the county, partnered with the Tap-IN program to offer free testing and RO systems for affected homeowners. Suggest it has a priority in funding reflective of importance of protecting drinking water.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Wabasha SWCD	The Wabasha SWCD is in process of completing a well inventory for Wabasha County and providing information to update the Minnesota Well Index. Local well owners have been responsive to our efforts, and regional efforts have raised awareness of private well management. Many have discovered that they had contaminants exceeding standards. Without funding from the PWI, we would not be able to complete the work that has been necessary on current regional efforts.
MDH	Private Well Initiative	SWCD	Olmsted County	We've worked with the PWI since 2021 to provide water testing services across SE MN. We support providing an avenue to ensure that private well owners have access to local and economical testing options to give peace of mind as they draw from their tap. Through the PWI, we developed TAP-IN Safe Drinking Water Program and maintain a collaborative of SWCDs, local public health, and environmental services staff across 9 SE MN counties. In the two rounds of funding, have offered testing to hundreds of households and offered one-on-one consultation to connect users to resources to address issues. When testing exceeds limits, the program assists with funding for mitigation for those experiencing financial hardship. Additional funding to support the State's workplan to address nitrate contamination of drinking water has allowed the TAP-IN collaborative to provide free water testing to 2,580 households and provide mitigation support to hundreds of users, of which 280 have been referred to MDA's program to receive a free water treatment system. We ask continued support for PWI to expand current programming.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Business	City of Le Sueur	Our Wellhead Protection Plan and two SWP grants to implement it have allowed us to take concrete steps to protect our drinking water sources. We were able to locate an abandoned well buried 13 feet beneath an electric transformer. We hired a well contractor to raise the casing above grade so it could be sealed in the future. Please have a priority in funding reflective of importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Battle Lake	Battle Lake is a small, lake-centered community in Otter Tail County. Our Public Water System has worked with the Source Water Protection Program since preparing its first Wellhead Protection Plan. The program's technical assistance has helped us understand local drinking water risks, prioritize protection strategies, and take practical steps to safeguard our municipal wells. We have also received multiple grants for implementation. For a small city with limited reousources, this assistance makes a real difference. Continued investment in this program directly benefits communities like ours. It helps local governments protect public health, reduce long-term risk to drinking water supplies, and make responsible use of limited public funds.

MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of St. Cloud	Have worked with the SWP Program for more than 15 years. Our planning activities have helped us take concrete actions, and financial assistance received through the grants have allowed us to purchase necessary equipment for monitoring, implement an early warning system, optimize water treatment, complete outreach about stormwater management, implement Adopt-a-Storm Drain and Storm Drain Art programs, implement a stormwater pond treatment effectiveness project, and coordinate with Minneapolis and St. Paul to prioritize stormwater-influenced potential contaminant sources. Suggest a priority in funding of the program reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Avon	Have worked with the SWP program since beginning on our Wellhead Protection Plan in 2011. We have received several Source Water Protection Grants to help us implement our plan, including: outreach and education to thousands of area residents and youth, install equipment to better understand water usage and aquifer impacts, install security at our wellhouse, and pull a pump to televise the well casing and determine its suitability as a long-term well for City. Suggest a priority in funding reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Onamia	Have worked with the SWP program since beginning on our Wellhead Protection Plan in 2014. We have received several Source Water Protection Grants to help us implement our plan, including: purchase and installation of a natural gas backup generator for service during power outages, seal the City's old creamery well, conduct exploratory borings to locate a source to construct a new municipal well in order to replace a well with high ammonia levels, connect a low-income homeowner to City water services, and seal a private well that posed a risk to the City's aquifer. Suggest a priority in funding reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Richmond	Have worked with the SWP program since beginning on our Wellhead Protection Plan in 2025. Working with the program has allowed us to target and prioritize threats to our drinking water source. It has also created funding opportunities for us to partner with local organizations on projects that benefit our community. Suggest a priority in funding reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	Hibbing Public Utilities	Hibbing Public Utilities has worked very closely with MDH staff since 2020. MDH has already assisted us in submitting an implementation grant and continues to support us pursuing other available grants, including from outside sources. In 2025 alone HPU was awarded funding several times by the MDH to help protect our drinking water. One of our main water sources was next to a local mining operation and has since become unusable due to mine dewatering activities. It is now more important than ever to protect what drinking water supply we currently have available. Pursuing funding opportunities helps the utility by keeping rates lower for a community that already has a poverty rate of 16.2% which is 7% higher than the rest of the state.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Mankato	Mankato uses both groundwater and wells under the direct influence of surface water. We have used multiple Source Water Protection Grants to obtain lab accreditation for nitrate analysis, develop a nitrate monitoring program, and perform preventative maintenance of the ion chromatography instrument. We also have received multiple grants to seal numerous wells in our DWSMA, protecting drinking water for Mankato and other neighboring systems. Suggest a funding priority for the Source Water Protection program that reflects the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Remer	MN Rural Water Association and MDH staff directly assisted our city with the development of our Wellhead Protection Plan Amendment, which outlines the critical, actionable tasks our city can take to protect our drinking water sources. Grant funding we were then eligible for has delivered tangible safety upgrades for our public drinking water wells. We have also received funding that will allow us to team up with the Region Five Development Commission to create a Comprehensive Plan that includes city, climate, and drinking water planning into a single cohesive strategy. This will allow us to have critical conversations about how external factors affect our current infrastructure, proactively identify risks, and take action before problems arise. Encourage continued funding.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Moorhead Public Services	Moorhead Public Services has successfully used grants from the the SWP Program for various projects to improve infrastructure and supply high-quality drinking water for Moorhead and Dilworth. The support received ensures our water supply resiliency and redundancy are maintained through the completion of projects such as Wellhead Protection Plan implementation and updates, installation of monitoring sensors at our surface water intake, security updates for well houses and portable generator docking stations, well televising, and full water supply rehabilitation. Source Water Protection staff also took time at public hearings to speak in support of protecting source water as a series of parcels near our DWSMA were up for rezoning, complementing the grant-funded efforts in safeguarding water resources. SWP Program provides a direct benefit to the communities we serve.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Northfield	Providing safe drinking water to residents and businesses of Northfield is an essential service. Protecting Northfield's water source is an essential component of providing safe drinking water to Northfield and that has been aided through the Source Water Protection Program.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of St. Hilaire	The City developed a wellhad protection plan in 2003 and 2013 with help from MDH. The city does not have the technical knowledge or capacity to complete this work without MDH SWP staff. In 2022 they helped navigate federal and state requirements to obtain an extension. The City also counts on the financial resources offered by the program, and it is reassuring to know funds are there to respond to unanticipated events or opportunities to improve water system resilience for growth and future generations.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of East Bethel	The City of East Bethel has worked with the MDH Source Water Protection Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2017. It has helped protect our drinking water and provide guidance for planning in the area. The team at Minnesota Rural Water Association has also greatly assisted us with technical knowledge and support throughout the whole process. We benefited from a \$10,000 Implementation Grant to help fund much needed emergency back-up power for two of our municipal wells and submitted grant requests for additional funding. Without this funding support, our city would be greatly hindered financially and lacking in a lot of knowledge involving the protection of our drinking water supply. We hope funding continues.

MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Edgerton	The SWP program helps us decrease nitrates in our water. CWFs have allowed us to provide cost share to landowners to reduce nitrate loading to our aquifer and most recently is helping us to potentially install solar on a high priority parcel within the wellhead area to further reduce nitrates. We have worked hard over the last 20 years to reduce nitrates from a high of 18-18ppm to our current levels of 5.5-8ppm, under the 10ppm safe drinking water standard. CWFs have been a key factor in helping us achieve this goal. Suggest a priority in funding of the program reflective of the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Richfield	This program has helped us successfully implement our Wellhead Protection Plan and make significant strides in protecting public health and our drinking water supply, including sealing a contaminated well and moving residents in a mobile home cooperative to a safe source. This was made possible by working with the SWP program.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Fairmont	We have applied for multiple Source Water Protection competitive grants for real-time monitoring of turbidity and nitrate for Dutch Creek, a major contributor to our surface water drinking water source, the Fairmont Chain of Lakes. In 2023, we worked with MDH on adoption of a Surface Water Intake Protection Plan. The Source Water Protection Implementation Grants have helped raise awareness for drinking water protection, and a new project with MDH grant funding will create floating treatment islands to help reduce nitrogen and phosphorous in tile water before entering the Chain of Lakes. Please give a priority level in funding reflective of the importance of protecting drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Lewiston	We have utilized the program multiple times to ensure our system can provide clean, quality water to our residents. Through this program we have sealed multiple wells in the DWSMA and are preparing to install a generator at our well site to guarantee water will always be available--tasks we would not have been able to accomplish without this funding source. This program makes our jobs easier, and the staff at the State and MRWA are top notch!
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Wabasha	We have worked with the SWP Program since 2011. Our first Wellhead Protection Plan has helped us take steps to safeguard our drinking water sources and educate the public. We have received nearly \$50,000 in grants to better understand our DWSMA, seal old wells, collect data on and build a map for storm stewers, and rehabilitate infrastructure. Suggest a priority in funding level that reflects the importance of clean drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Nielsville	We have worked with the SWP Program since we began preparing our first Wellhead Protection Plan in 2005. These activities have helped us to take concrete actions to safeguard drinking water sources. Received a SWP Grant in 2022 which enabled us to protect our two wells with six foot chain linked fences with doors and replace two doors on our well house. As a city of 78 residents this support is welcomed.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Chatfield	We meet with SWP program staff every year, and the program has helped us get grants to help with our work to keep water clean. Through this program we have partnered with the FGI initiative and have planted Kernza and now Winter Cameline inside our DWSMA. Have also partnered with the SWP Program to have meetings with local ag producers and other government agencies to reduce nitrate in our drinking water. It has been indispensable in our efforts to protect our municipal water supply.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Cities	City of Riverton	We recently amended our Wellhead Protection Plan. Without the assistance of MDH and MN Rural Water Association staff, the process would have been very difficult and we would have needed a consultant to complete the work. Small cities like ours do not have the staffing of financial resources to do so. We are eager to begin implementation. Technical and financial assistance allows communities like ours to continue to protect our source of drinking water.
MDH	Source Water Protection	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends approximately \$8M for Source Water Protection, a core priority that requires sustained funding.
MDH	Source Water Protection		Country Estates Mobile Home Park	Country Estates Mobile Home Park has partnered with the Source Water Protection program to develop our Wellhead Protection Plan. Through this effort, identified several vulnerabilities in our system, and now have a plan in place to address them. We are also now eligible for financial assistance, which we hope to secure to make improvements. With continued support, we will be able to enhance the reliability of our system and improve the quality of service for the residents.
MDH	Source Water Protection		Garness Trinity Lutheran Church	Our church applied for a Source Water Protection Transient Grant to reduce nitrogen levels in our drinking water. We wouldn't have been able to do this work without the grant helping us. Suggest a priority in funding level that reflects the importance of clean drinking water.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	Chloride impairments represent one of the most significant and growing water quality challenges for cities. Support continued funding paired with policy recommendations that provide financial support and flexibility for meeting chloride discharge reductions.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Environmental Organizations	Sue Nissen and Randy Holst, Stop Over Salting	Minnesotans are repeatedly shocked to learn about our growing chloride pollution challenge. The good news is there is a clear pathway to reduction: this program. But it needs more funding. Reducing salt use is the only answer, and this transformational program makes it easier to do. Please increase support.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increase investment (\$2M) to address increasing chloride levels throughout Minnesota.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Watershed Districts	Capitol Region Watershed District	Chloride pollution from road salt one of the most significant and detrimental issues. Need state coordination and financial support. Enhanced funding support requested.
MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Watershed Districts	Nine Mile Watershed District	Chloride pollution from road salt one of the most significant and detrimental issues. Need state coordination and financial support. Enhanced funding support requested.

MPCA	Chloride Reduction Program	Watershed Districts	Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission	Lakes and streams in the BCWMC continue to be threatened by high chlorides, primarily coming from winter deicing activities. Of the 14 priority waterbodies, six are impaired for chloride. Despite sustained local efforts, chloride levels continue to increase. Stronger statewide coordination, expanded technical support, and increased financial investment are needed to accelerate progress toward protecting the health and ecology of Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams. Please increase support for the program and advocate for enhanced funding for reduction efforts within Council priorities.
MPCA	CWC Admin	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends approximately \$1.5M to strengthen Council staffing capacity in response to the growing complexity and scope of its work.
MPCA	Wastewater/Stormwater TMDL Implementation	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	This is among our top priorities as the program provides essential technical assistance to cities, integrates stormwater and wastewater data with WRAPS, and maintains the MN Stormwater Manual--a resource relied upon by thousands. Without this support, cities with limited capacity could fall short of meeting requirements.
MPFA	Point Source Implementation Grants	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	The PSIG program is a lifeline for communities that must upgrade stormwater and wastewater treatment infrastructure. These are often mandated improvements that cannot be delayed, yet costs are well beyond what local utilities can cover. This also leverages Clean Water Revolving Fund dollars, stretching state dollars further.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	Accomplishments need to be accounted for at a landscape scale. Need to also understand overhead costs and compare those to existing processes. Need consistency from BWSR and SWCDs on developing set rates and in program delivery.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	Pesticide Testing of Private Wells and the Private Well Initiative should be combined. Turn testing over to MDH and work with MN Well Owners Organization.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Jen Wahls	Where local technical teams (e.g. Local Forestry Teams) or workforce (e.g. Consulting foresters) are present, utilize existing service providers and systems that are delivering programs efficiently.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Business	Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI)	With less than 10 years of CWFs remaining, MARI encourages prioritization of recommendations that support systems-level changes in technical assistance needed to support farmers in adopting the regenerative ag practices necessary to meet clean water goals. We also support the development of netter indicators and monitoring across programs and agencies to track efficacy of these approaches. Regenerative systems are complex, highly context specific, and require years of experimentation, learning, and adjustment. Technical assistance is vital. To that end, we recommend: 1) support emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices; and 2) expand and enhance education, training, and resources for TA providers. Several examples and specific programs are included in the letter.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	For cities, the CWF is often the essential catalyst that makes complex stormwater and water quality projects financially viable. Funds the technical expertise we need, supports compliance, and enables us to participate meaningfully in watershed-scale planning and implementation.
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Minnesota Environmental Partnership	Appreciate the Council's revised process and commend it for being significantly more transparent and openly deliberative. This is an important moment for the CWF, as this round will have completed 20 of the 25 years of funding. Yet, more progress is needed. It is time to reexamine and refocus the allocation of limited CWF resources. Council should prioritize funding for programs that address challenges at scale and over time, not just 1-2 year increments. Need to fund programs or practices that are capable of meeting state water goals.  The NRS is refreshingly clear in calling for a shift in how we address nutrients, and we support a substantial increase in funding for developing and implementing a wide range of living cover options.  Several CWF programs have previously been funded in part or whole by fees. The Council should examine whether substitution has taken place and act to restore these programs' traditional reliance on fees.

MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	<p>As the CWF enters its final quarter of funding, it is imperative that Council agencies receiving CWF investments focus on outcomes, results, and system change. Monitoring and planning completed to-date should inform implementation, and CWF-supported programs should adjust to monitoring results and demonstrating effectiveness.</p> <p>TNC recommends establishing a transparent process that clearly explains how proposals will be ranked and scored using publicly available criteria. The following are suggested: 1) show high potential for early restoration and delisting or prevention of impairment, 2) show high potential for long-term water quality and conservation benefits, 3) statewide significance for recreation, drinking water, economic interest, cultural or community significance, 4) proven outcomes and cost-effectiveness, 5) contribute to system change past 2034, and 6) significantly leverage policy and investments by others to achieve water quality goals.</p> <p>TNC supports strategic capacity-building investments across CWF programs to ensure continued effectiveness, accountability, and long-term impact. Additionally, CWF investments should continue to support emerging, innovative, and holistic approaches to scale for the long term.</p> <p>The Fund has enabled meaningful progress across the state, supporting strong partnerships and advancing measurable outcomes for water quality and public health. At the same time, emerging challenges, evolving priorities, and remaining gaps in implementation underscore that this work is not yet complete. Continued and strategic investment will be essential to sustain momentum, address unmet needs, and ensure that the benefits of clean water are realized for all Minnesotans now and into the future.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Freshwater	<p>We appreciate the strategic and transparent process being used. The rubric is an excellent tool—we hope water quantity is given ample consideration as a co-benefit. For criteria to use moving forward, we encourage you to prioritize proposals that (examples of programs for each in the letter): 1) fill gaps in clean water needs not addressed by other funding sources, 2) are designed to address future water challenges using a regional and cross-sector approach, 3) provide foundational scientific knowledge, and 4) help landowners reduce agricultural pollution.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI)	<p>With less than 10 years of CWFs remaining, MARI encourages prioritization of recommendations that support systems-level changes in technical assistance needed to support farmers in adopting the regenerative ag practices necessary to meet clean water goals. We also support the development of netter indicators and monitoring across programs and agencies to track efficacy of these approaches. Regenerative systems are complex, highly context specific, and require years of experimentation, learning, and adjustment. Technical assistance is vital. To that end, we recommend: 1) support emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices; and 2) expand and enhance education, training, and resources for TA providers. Several examples and specific programs are included in the letter.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Environmental Organizations	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Farmers	Minnesota Farmers Union	<p>Over the past year there has been a reduction in federal conservation assistance, and we are currently in a challenging agricultural economy with low crop prices and high input costs. In this context, Minnesota farmers are relying even more on the CWF's working lands programs for the funding and technical assistance needed to improve their operations with changes that promote water quality.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Farmers	Minnesota Agriculture Resilience Initiative (MARI)	<p>With less than 10 years of CWFs remaining, MARI encourages prioritization of recommendations that support systems-level changes in technical assistance needed to support farmers in adopting the regenerative ag practices necessary to meet clean water goals. We also support the development of netter indicators and monitoring across programs and agencies to track efficacy of these approaches. Regenerative systems are complex, highly context specific, and require years of experimentation, learning, and adjustment. Technical assistance is vital. To that end, we recommend: 1) support emerging, innovative, and holistic TA programs and practices; and 2) expand and enhance education, training, and resources for TA providers. Several examples and specific programs are included in the letter.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Fishing	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Hunting	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Lakes and Streams	Conservation Community	<p>With the sunset of the Legacy amendment approaching in 2034, these recommendations are consequential to ensure the best possible results from these unique resources. Encourage recommendations emphasize investments in projects and programs that have a track record of being, or can easily be, measurable with demonstrable outcomes. Good results come from the use of CWFs, but the uncertainty of future availability should provide some urgency to support highest and best use.</p>
MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	UMN	Dr. Amy Kireta, UMN Duluth	<p>Suggest increase to scoring for Engagement and Community Value in the rubric. Not only is this best practice to co-create projects that are most needed, but is critical for gaining community support and trust as funding becomes more scarce.</p>

MULTIPLE	MULTIPLE	Watershed Districts	Bois de Sioux Watershed District	CWF programs are maximized to supplement costs of a variety of large scale projects, but opportunities to utilize CWF for the most impactful projects are limited and, in many cases, prohibited by administrative separation of flood control projects vs water quality projects. In the Red River Valley, water quality is dependent upon flood control. Encourage Council members to consider expanded users of CWFs in recognition of areas like the Red River Basin where water quality is directly influenced by flooding.
Olmsted	Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative	Farmers	Land Stewardship Project	Strong support to expand this program to more counties in SE MN. We continually hear from farmers outside of Olmsted that they wish they had access to this innovative program for their own farms.
Olmsted	Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative	SWCD	Olmsted SWCD	Groundwater is especially susceptible to contamination in our karst region in SE MN. EPA declared nitrate contamination in groundwater in SE MN an imminent public health threat in 2023. SWCDs are the "boots on the ground". The efforts underway through this program are making a difference. We support the application and continued strong partnership with BWSR.
Olmsted	SE Groundwater and Soil Health Initiative	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends this program and its success be used to set program standards for other soil health programs.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Business	WSB Engineering	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Business	Barr Engineering	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Cities	Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition	Applied research on stormwater BMPs directly informs how cities design and operate stormwater infrastructure. This program has produced actionable results. Continue to support so we have access to cutting-edge, locally relevant guidance.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Cities	City of Duluth	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Environmental Organizations	The Nature Conservancy	TNC recommends increased investment (\$3M) on recognition of the growing intensity of precipitation events, increasing MS4 regulatory requirements, and the role of stormwater sunoff driving impairments in Minnesota's lakes and streams.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	UMN	John Gulliver	Funding for stormwater research is critically limited, and what MN is able to do is only because of the MSRC. This research is needed to inform the actions of many across the state, who would otherwise be relying on outdated information.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District	Chloride pollution major concern. WD has taken actions but concentrations still increasing. 10 waterbodies already impaired. Need more action and support and this program helps make that happen.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	Mississippi Watershed Management Organization	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	South Washington Watershed District	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
UMN	Stormwater Research Program	Watershed Districts	Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District	Two priorities of the WD (water quality and flood control) aided by the program. "One of the clearest ways the Council can...support implementable clean water for the communities we serve."
UMN	Stormwater Research Program		David Pilipiak, PE	Essential stormwater research that help consultants support clients. Cutting edge research to design and maintain stormwater BMPs that are effective and efficient. Science-based training and outreach to make sure local work uses best info available.
	Voyagers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Counties	Commissioner Jason Sjoblum, Koochiching County	Please continue funding for the VNP Clean Water Project. Many clean water projects have been accomplished in St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, improving water quality throughout the watershed from east to west. As more people flock to water-based areas, it is crucial to continue funding to benefit clean water goals.

	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Sen. Grant Hauschild	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Sen. Jennifer McEwen, Rep. Liish Kozlowski, Rep. Pete Johnson	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Sen. Rob Farnsworth, Rep. Cal Warwas	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Legislature	Rep. Skraba	Importance of these waters for tourism, fishing, boating, and northern MN economy. Project is delivering real results. Leverage is valuable.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program	Townships	Kabetogama Township	The grant dollars the VNPCWJPB has received from the CWF over the years have been greatly appreciated and critical in our efforts to successfully complete sewer infrastructure projects in the Voyageur Park communities of Crane Lake, Ash River, Island View and Kabetogama. Our Township Board of Supervisors supports the funding request of the program.
	Voyaguers National Park Water Quality Protection Program		Rob Scott, Crane Lake Water and Sanitary Board	The success of the Clean Water Project is directly related to the funding approved by the CWC. The ability to improve the sewer systems and infrastructure ensures immediate and long-term water quality will be sustained. It is not fiscally feasible to do this work at the local level--external funding is needed. Thank you for your ongoing support.



Goodhue County SWCD  
104 East 3rd Ave, P.O. Box 335  
Goodhue, MN 55027  
651-923-5286 Ext. 4  
[www.goodhueswcd.org](http://www.goodhueswcd.org)

Jen Kader  
Administrator  
Clean Water Council

Re: Letter of Support - Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative

Ms. Kader

Please accept the following comments from Goodhue SWCD supporting the SE MN Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative.

Groundwater is a vital resource in Minnesota and the primary source of drinking water for most residents. In Southeast Minnesota's vulnerable karst region, increasing nitrate contamination from agricultural practices has become a significant concern.


Minnesota Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) play a critical role in addressing this issue by working directly with landowners to implement conservation solutions. Current efforts include free well testing and water treatment systems for households with unsafe nitrate levels.

The Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative provides farmers with technical assistance and financial incentives to adopt proven soil health practices, such as cover crops, alternative crops, grazing systems, and improved pasture management. These practices reduce nitrate leaching and are supported by extensive monitoring and data collection.

Many SWCDs currently manage multiple soil health programs that provide incentives and technical assistance to landowners. However, these programs often differ in practice requirements, contract terms, and eligibility criteria, which can limit participation and create confusion.

The Goodhue SWCD supports the Southeast Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative because it offers the opportunity to create a unified, outcome-based program that can work across county and watershed boundaries. We support expanding this approach throughout the region to incentivize landowners for implementing effective soil health practices while reducing the risks associated with adoption.

Sincerely,

  
Beau Kennedy  
District Manager  
Goodhue SWCD



June 11, 2026



Freeborn County Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
1400 West Main Street  
Albert Lea, MN 56007-1816  
Phone: 507-373-5607 Ext. 3  
[www.freebornswcd.org](http://www.freebornswcd.org)

TO: Clean Water Council

FROM: Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District - Board of Supervisors

Re: Letter of Support – Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative

To Whom it May Concern,

Groundwater is one of Minnesota's most valuable resources and it is the primary source of drinking water for most Minnesotans. This valued resource is susceptible to contamination in our vulnerable, karst region in SE Minnesota, and there is growing concern that nitrate pollution is increasing due to current agricultural land use practices.

In 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that nitrate contamination in groundwater in southeast Minnesota is an imminent public health threat and tasked state agencies and local units of government with addressing these concerns.

Minnesota Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are uniquely positioned to work with landowners on private lands to address this issue. We are the "boots on the ground" conservation teams that have a history of relationship building and trust to provide sound conservation-based programming that addresses resource concerns, farm by farm.

Today, SWCDs in Southeast Minnesota are providing short-term solutions to landowners with high nitrate in their private wells by providing free well testing and installing water treatment systems in homes exceeding the safe drinking water standard for nitrate (greater than 10 milligrams per liter).

Olmsted County's Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative is being delivered through Olmsted SWCD to local farmers and should be expanded to serve as a regional model to address leaching of nitrogen to groundwater. The program provides landowners with technical assistance and financial incentives to adopt soil health practices which is a proven long-term solution to the migration of nitrate into groundwater. Practices include planting cover crops, growing alternative crops and small grains, adding haying and grazing acres, and improving management of pastures. Implementing these practices reduces nitrate leaching and is supported with robust data collection from different agricultural settings in SE Minnesota including lysimeter samples, tile water testing, spring monitoring, and cave drip sampling.

The Freeborn County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports this Clean Water Council application and continuing its strong partnership with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to expand the Olmsted County Soil Health Program to the 11-county southeast Minnesota region.

Thank you for supporting conservation in Southeastern Minnesota!

Curt Helland  
Board Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Curt Helland'.



**Fillmore Soil & Water Conservation  
District**

912 Houston St. NW, PO Box 45, Preston, Minnesota 55965  
Phone: 507-887-0241  
www.fillmoreswcd.org

June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026

TO: Clean Water Council

FROM: Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District – District Administrator

Re: Letter of Support – Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative

**To Whom It May Concern,**

Groundwater is a critical drinking water source across Minnesota and is especially vulnerable in southeastern Minnesota due to karst geology. In this region, nitrate contamination has become an increasing concern, largely linked to land use practices in agricultural watersheds.

In response, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified nitrate in southeastern Minnesota groundwater as a significant public health issue, calling for coordinated action among state and local partners.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), including Fillmore SWCD, play an essential role in addressing these challenges by working directly with landowners. Their close relationships within the agricultural community allow for practical, locally tailored conservation efforts that improve water quality on private lands.

Current efforts include assisting households affected by elevated nitrate levels in private wells through testing and support for treatment systems. Alongside these short-term responses, long-term improvement is being driven by conservation practices that reduce nitrogen loss, such as cover crops, diversified rotations, grazing integration, and improved pasture management. These efforts are reinforced by ongoing water quality monitoring throughout southeastern Minnesota.

Fillmore SWCD supports continued investment in these programs and broader regional expansion of effective soil health and groundwater protection strategies in partnership with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and other collaborators.

**Sincerely,**  
Sincerely,

Riley Buley  
District Administrator  
Fillmore SWCD



## **Rice Soil and Water Conservation District**

**2211 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. NW Faribault, MN 55021**  
**Phone: (507) 332-5408 [www.riceswcd.org](http://www.riceswcd.org)**

June 17, 2026

TO: Clean Water Council

FROM: Rice Soil & Water Conservation District - Board of Supervisors

Re: Letter of Support – Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative

To Whom it May Concern,

Rice County is the Northwest most county in Southeast Minnesota. The eastern side of the county has karst topography, which means it is shallow to bedrock and vulnerable to groundwater contamination. Clean groundwater is essential for sustaining the people and livestock of the area. Unfortunately, nitrate levels across the region continue to rise in many drinking water wells.

Along with ten other SWCD's in the Southeast, Rice Soil and Water Conservation District has been promoting practices that help reduce the amount of nitrates getting to the groundwater below. From nutrient management planning, to cover crops, reduced tillage practices, perennial forage crops and enrollment into permanent conservation programs, Rice SWCD is gaining momentum in the adoption of these practices. Unfortunately, we are restricted from adopting them at a faster pace due to limitations in available funding to assist landowners.

New funding could help keep us on the upward pace at adopting many of these practices.

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports this Clean Water Council application and continuing its strong partnership with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to expand the Olmsted County Soil Health Program to the 11-county southeast Minnesota region.

Thank you for considering this application for funding!

The Rice SWCD Board of Supervisors:



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John Larson- Chairperson



**STEELE COUNTY**  
Soil and Water Conservation District

235 Cedardale Drive SE  
Owatonna MN 55060  
507-451-6730 Ext. 3  
[www.steeleswcd.org](http://www.steeleswcd.org)

June 10, 2026

TO: Clean Water Council

FROM: Steele Soil & Water Conservation District - Board of Supervisors

Re: Letter of Support – Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative

To Whom it May Concern,

Groundwater is one of Minnesota's most valuable resources and it is the primary source of drinking water for most Minnesotans. This valued resource is susceptible to contamination in our vulnerable, karst region in SE Minnesota, and there is growing concern that nitrate pollution is increasing due to current agricultural land use practices.

In 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that nitrate contamination in groundwater in southeast Minnesota is an imminent public health threat and tasked state agencies and local units of government with addressing these concerns.

Minnesota Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are uniquely positioned to work with landowners on private lands to address this issue. We are the "boots on the ground" conservation teams that have a history of relationship building and trust to provide sound conservation-based programming that addresses resource concerns, farm by farm.

Today, SWCDs in Southeast Minnesota are providing short-term solutions to landowners with high nitrate in their private wells by providing free well testing and installing water treatment systems in homes exceeding the safe drinking water standard for nitrate (greater than 10 milligrams per liter).


Olmsted County's Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative is being delivered through Olmsted SWCD to local farmers and should be expanded to serve as a regional model to address leaching of nitrogen to groundwater. The program provides landowners with technical assistance and financial incentives to adopt soil health practices which is a proven long-term solution to the migration of nitrate into groundwater. Practices include planting cover crops, growing alternative crops and small grains, adding haying and grazing acres, and improving management of pastures. Implementing these practices reduces nitrate leaching and is supported with robust data collection from different agricultural settings in SE Minnesota including lysimeter samples, tile water testing, spring monitoring, and cave drip sampling.

The Steele Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports this Clean Water Council application and continuing its strong partnership with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to expand the Olmsted County Soil Health Program to the 11-county southeast Minnesota region.

Thank you for supporting conservation in Southeastern Minnesota!

The Steele SWCD Board of Supervisors:

  
District 1 – Mark Ihlenfeld

  
District 2 – David Melby

  
District 3 – Mark Ditlevson

  
District 4 – Dan Hansen

  
District 5 – Brad Hagen

# Winona County SWCD

Providing conservation assistance in Winona County since 1938.

## *Mission*

Promote soil and water conservation through technical, educational and financial assistance.

## *Vision*

Comprehensive use of our natural resources for all generations.

400 Wilson St N

Lewiston MN 55952

507-523-2171 - Ext 3

Monday-Friday 8:00-4:30

winonaswcd.org



June 18, 2026

## LETTER OF SUPPORT Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative Clean Water Council Application

To Whom it May Concern,

Groundwater is one of Minnesota's most valuable resources and it is the primary source of drinking water for most Minnesotans. This valued resource is susceptible to contamination in our vulnerable, karst region in SE Minnesota, and there is growing concern that nitrate pollution is increasing.

In 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that nitrate contamination in groundwater in southeast Minnesota is an imminent public health threat and tasked state agencies and local units of government with addressing these concerns.

Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are uniquely positioned to work with landowners on private lands to address this issue. We are the "boots on the ground" conservation teams that have a history of relationship building and trust to provide sound conservation-based programming that addresses resource concerns, farm by farm.

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Winona County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports this Clean Water Council application and continuing its strong partnership with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to expand the Olmsted County Soil Health Program to the 11-county southeast Minnesota region.

Thank you for supporting conservation in Southeastern Minnesota!

Winona County SWCD Board of Supervisors  
Approved - June 18, 2026

  
Andy Kronebusch - Board Chair



## **Root River Soil and Water Conservation District**

Agricultural Service Center

805 N. Hwy. 44/76, Suite 1

Caledonia, MN 55921

**(507) 724-5261 ext. 3**

<https://www.co.houston.mn.us/departments/soil-and-water/>

June 11, 2026

TO: Clean Water Council

FROM: Root River Soil & Water Conservation District - Board of Supervisors

Re: Letter of Support – Southeast MN Groundwater Protection & Soil Health Initiative

To Whom It May Concern,

Groundwater is one of Minnesota's most valuable resources and it is the primary source of drinking water for most Minnesotans. This valued resource is susceptible to contamination in our vulnerable, karst region in SE Minnesota, and there is growing concern that nitrate pollution is increasing due to current agricultural land use practices.

In 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that nitrate contamination in groundwater in southeast Minnesota is an imminent public health threat and tasked state agencies and local units of government with addressing these concerns.

Minnesota Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are uniquely positioned to work with landowners on private lands to address this issue. We are the "boots on the ground" conservation teams that have a history of relationship building and trust to provide sound conservation-based programming that addresses resource concerns, farm by farm.

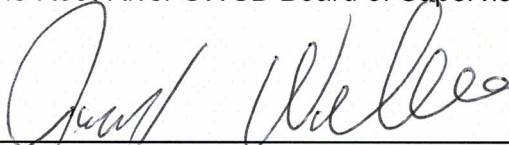
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Olmsted County's Groundwater Protection and Soil Health Initiative is being delivered through our partner, Olmsted SWCD, to local farmers and should be expanded to serve as a regional model to address leaching of nitrogen to groundwater. The program provides landowners with technical assistance and financial incentives to adopt soil health practices which is a proven long-term solution to the migration of nitrate into groundwater. Practices include planting cover crops, growing alternative crops and small grains, adding haying and grazing acres, and improving management of pastures. Implementing these practices reduces nitrate leaching and is supported with robust data collection from different agricultural settings in SE Minnesota including lysimeter samples, tile water testing, spring monitoring, and cave drip sampling.

The Root River Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors supports this Clean Water Council application and continuing its strong partnership with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to expand the Olmsted County Soil Health Program to the 11-county southeast Minnesota region.

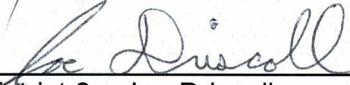
Thank you for supporting conservation in Southeastern Minnesota!

The Root River SWCD Board of Supervisors:



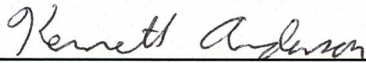
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District 1 – Jerry Welke




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District 2 – Joe Driscoll



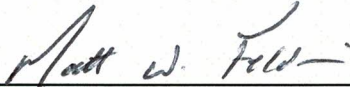
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District 3 – Kenneth Anderson (Chair)



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District 4 – Glenn Kruse



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District 5 – Matt Feldmeier (V. Chair)

## WBIF Clean Water Council priority funding

Mary Jo Truchon <mjtruchon.anokaswcd@gmail.com>

To: Kader, Jen (She/Her/Hers) (MPCA) <Jen.Kader@state.mn.us>



Wed 6/24/2026 5:55 PM

 Flagged

You don't often get email from mjtruchon.anokaswcd@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**This message may be from an external email source.**

Do not select links or open attachments unless verified. Report all suspicious emails to Minnesota IT Services Security Operations Center.

Dear Jen- I would add my voice to the letter MN Counties, MASWCD and MN WDs directed to the Clean Water Council to support WBIF as their highest funding priority. Having served on the Anoka Conservation District Board for over 25 years, and having seen the effectiveness of this initiative in the four Watersheds ACD is located, I fully support WBIF as their Clean Water Council top spending priority. No other program to protect Minnesota's precious water resources has ever come close.

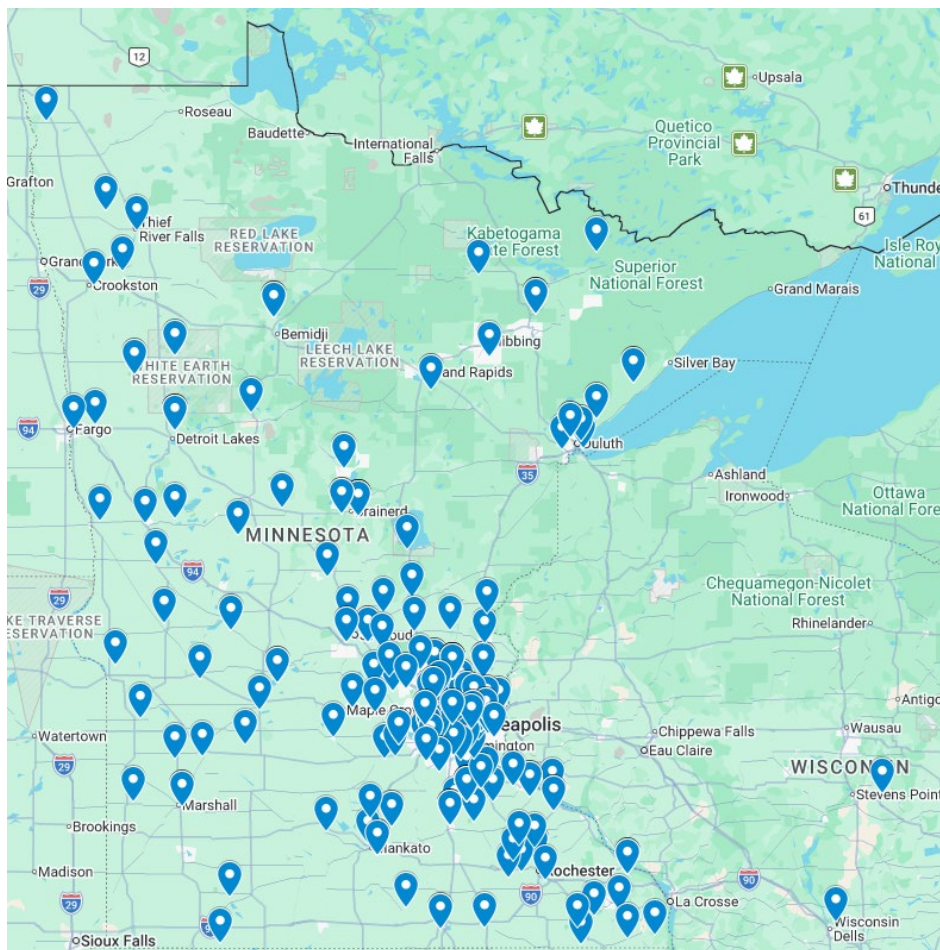
Sincerely, Mary Jo Truchon

# Considerations survey summary

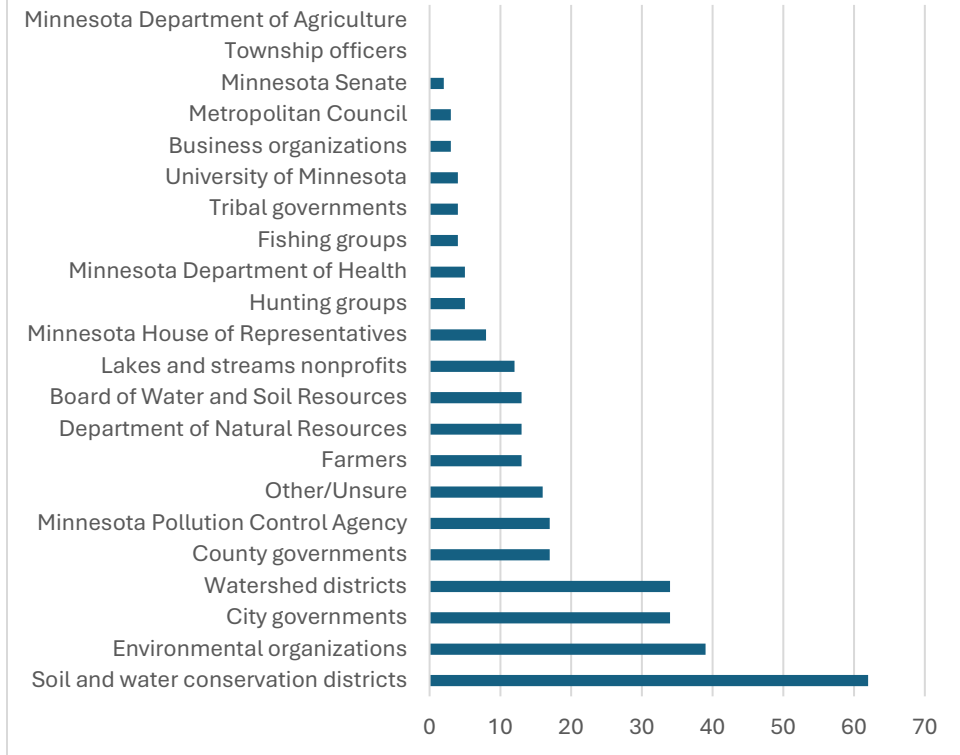
July 8, 2026

As a part of the final activity in the June 15 Clean Water Council meeting, participants were asked to draft “considerations” for how to set priorities for funding for the FY28-29 biennium. Those considerations were intended as just that—things for Council members to bear in mind as they make their recommendations. What was drafted was distilled down to 12 individual items, which were then put into a survey so people beyond just those in the room could share which they felt should carry more weight.

The survey was posted on June 24 and was open until July 7. Upon close of the survey, 308 people responded, representing 171 zip codes and all but two of the constituent groups.



## Response Count



Each person had the option of voting for their top 5 considerations. The outcome of that ranking is below:

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Total Count</b>
Invest in programs that prioritize clean water outcomes and enhance habitat and ecosystem services, improving conditions for fish and wildlife	<b>191</b>
Invest in implementation programs that are science-based and locally relevant	<b>185</b>
Invest in programs that improve water quality across Minnesota at the scale the challenge requires	<b>166</b>
Invest in programs with outcomes that are resilient and durable for the long term	<b>165</b>
Invest in maintaining and enhancing the current adaptive, watershed based, program focused approach to improving water quality	<b>146</b>
Invest in programs that leverage past research, fill identified gaps, and promote the ability to try new approaches to address water quality concerns	<b>138</b>
Invest in program and local staffing capacity needed to meet Clean Water Fund goals	<b>125</b>
Invest in programs that increase the likelihood for future success, such as research, workforce development, education and outreach, collaboration, etc.	<b>103</b>
Invest in programs that will produce near-term measurable results in water quality	<b>87</b>
Invest in programs that leverage outside funding	<b>68</b>
Invest in programs that consider equity and public health in program delivery	<b>66</b>
Invest in capturing and telling the story of how Clean Water Funds have enhanced water quality outcomes for Minnesota	<b>58</b>

Respondents could also offer an “other” for anything that was missing. Responses for that item included the following:

- GET RID OF PFAS
- #1 #2 #3 #4 #5 - only invest in programs that include measurable outcomes. So you'll need to finance benchmarking at the beginning, and then testing thereafter.
- I think more research is essential. As I mentioned once at a CWC meeting, a reasonable investment in research that is expected to result in improved water quality would be 10% of the total budget, assuming that the research goal is to learn how to make the CWC investments in would make CWC projects at 10% (or more) effective.
- Invest in concrete long term capital projects that protect water
- Be tough on the mining proposals for northern Minnesota. Why is that question not on your priority list?
- Invest in foundational data and support systems that facilitate data sharing, collaboration, and decision making.
- Invest in programs that deliver quantifiable environmental benefits in terms of documented pollutant reductions (e.g. PSIG program)
- Invest in programs that minimize flooding.
- Ensure investments are cost effective and best value
- Systems change
- Find way to standardize Impaired Waters data over the years to be able to properly assess our progress and failures over the years.
- Soil Health!
- Invest in readying the state for climate change adaptation.
- Invest in programs that fund needed infrastructure that clean up the water
- Invest in cover crops Invest in reduced tillage agriculture invest in small grin cultivation
- Work with the Ag community (real/actual farmers, not environmental groups posing as farmers), not against it.
- continued funding and development of the continuous nitrate network.
- Expand current programs with more dollars, or even to reevaluate programs to move the limited budgets to programs that make the best impact
- Continue to invest in the Watershed Based Implementation Funding.
- Invest in keeping staff long-term to reduce turnover and re-training expenses
- There is too much money spent in staffing. The goal of this money was not to hire more people and have more job titles. The purpose of this funding was to implement. Monitoring is great - but what do you expect to change if the only thing you are doing with the money is hiring people to sit at a desk to facilitate and organize and make rules.
- Programs that are aimed at protecting our water Aquifers for the long term.