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March 26, 2025

Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Chair Foug Hawj

Chair Hawj and members of the Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and our members, I would like to express our support for the recommendations of the Clean Water Council to the legislature for Clean Water Fund appropriations in SF 2865.

The 28-member Council includes Legislators of both parties, state agency staff, and Minnesota citizens with expertise on the issues impacting Minnesota's waters. This Council rigorously reviews proposals on allocating money from the Clean Water Fund and makes recommendation to the Legislature for each biennium.

The Council's thorough process and holistic approach enables it to navigate the complex needs of Minnesota's large variety of waters and the government agencies that manage them. It is called upon to make careful choices, especially this year, when the level of anticipated funding has shrunk since November 2024. The Clean Water Fund and Minnesota are best served when the Legislature follows the Council's lead on these important decisions.

MEP and our members are disappointed to see the Clean Water Council recommend reducing Clean Water Fund support for Forever Green at the University of Minnesota from \$6 million the previous biennium to \$5 million, a 17% cut. The Forever Green Initiative is one of Minnesota's most promising and effective tools for improving the quality of both groundwater and surface waters through a durable, market-based approach. This program focuses on solutions that achieve win-wins for farmers, businesses, and Minnesota's water resources.

We will continue to engage with the Clean Water Council on this issue and hope to see the \$1 million funding restored next year. In the meantime, however, we support the Clean Water Council's critical role in determining how best to use the Fund to enhance and restore Minnesota's water. We appreciate the Committee's support of these recommendations forwarded by the Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Morse". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Steve Morse
Executive Director

Submitted on behalf of the organizations listed on the following page.

Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Clean River Partners

Climate Land Leaders

Environmental Working Group

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

Izaak Walton League Minnesota Division

League of Women Voters Duluth

League of Women Voters Minnesota

Minnesota Ornithologists Union

Minnesota Well Owners Organization

Resilient Cities and Communities

Saint Paul Bird Alliance

Vote Climate