

# STATE OF MINNESOTA

Executive Department



## Governor Tim Walz

### Executive Order 19-12; Rescinding Executive Order 14-09

#### Directing Agency Cooperation on the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

**I, Tim Walz, Governor of the State of Minnesota**, by the power vested in me by the Constitution and applicable statutes, issue the following Executive Order:

It is important to recognize that agriculture is a cornerstone of Minnesota's economy. Minnesota farmers and ranchers ("producers") provide food, feed, fuel, and fiber for the nation and the world. It is also important to recognize that Minnesotans value the health of our rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. We seek to recognize the environmental stewardship of producers who implement and maintain desired soil and water practices, and we must continue to protect the environment while supporting economic development in our State.

On January 17, 2012, Governor Mark Dayton signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding with Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, pledging to work together to support the development of Minnesota's Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program.

In 2013, Minnesota authorized the Minnesota Department of Agriculture ("MDA"), in consultation with Department of Natural Resources ("DNR"), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency ("MPCA"), and the Board of Water and Soil Resources ("BWSR"), to implement the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program. *See* Minnesota Statutes 2018, sections 17.9891–17.993.

This voluntary program was first piloted in select watersheds across the state until July 2015, when the Commissioner of the MDA, in consultation with the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program Advisory Committee, the Commissioner of the DNR, the Commissioner of the MPCA, and BWSR, determined that the program was suitable to be implemented across the state.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program will help to enhance the water quality of Minnesota's rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater, as well as promote the environmental stewardship of Minnesota's farmers.

Minnesota water quality protection authorities and responsibilities are shared between several state agencies.

For these reasons, I order that:

1. The Commissioner of MDA, on behalf of MDA, DNR, BWSR, and MPCA, will sign the certification contracts with the producers upon evidence that the producers have satisfied all program requirements.
2. The Commissioners of MDA, DNR, BWSR, and MPCA will incorporate and promote this program through other existing watershed approaches and programs to support clean water.
3. The Commissioners of MDA, DNR, BWSR, and MPCA, must honor MDA's certification contracts with the producers.
4. In accordance with Minnesota law, each previously mentioned agency must honor the producers' certification contracts with MDA when implementing new water quality laws and rules that are adopted following the producers' certifications.
5. The Commissioner of MDA will develop or update a memorandum of understanding clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each agency for the permanent program.
6. Executive Order 14-09 is rescinded.

This Executive Order is effective fifteen days after publication in the State Register and filing with the Secretary of State. It will remain in effect until rescinded by proper authority or until it expires in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 4.035, subdivision 3.

Signed on March 29, 2019.



**Tim Walz**  
Governor

Filed According to Law:



**Steve Simon**  
Secretary of State

