



DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

March 30, 2022

RE: Support for House File 2908/Senate File 2768

Dear Senator Mathews and Committee Members:

My name is Sara Sietsema and I am the Environmental Specialist for the City of Willmar, and am submitting this letter on behalf of the City of Willmar as well as the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, of which Willmar is a member, in support of Senate File 2768. The Coalition is a group of more than 100 cities throughout the state, and this bill and its companion in the Senate for the purpose of reducing salt pollution in our waters.

The City of Willmar and the other CGMC cities play an essential role in protecting Minnesota's waters through their wastewater and storm water systems. In Willmar, like many other cities across Minnesota, we deal with high levels of salty parameters in our waters and seek the opportunity to partner in efforts to reduce such pollution. High levels of chloride are harmful to aquatic plants and animals and may also impact groundwater used for drinking. Chloride and other salts can damage treatment infrastructure as well. Unlike nutrients such as phosphorus or nitrogen, chloride permanently pollutes water because there is no cost-effective or easy method to remove it.

Road salt has been identified as one of the primary causes for the increased chloride in Minnesota's waters. Because it is not feasible to remove chloride from wastewater and stormwater, the best way to address the issue is by preventing it from reaching our water in the first place. Senate File 2768 is an important first step that will assist in reducing the amount of road salt used on sidewalks and streets, help the businesses in our communities implement best management practices, and result in cleaner waters across Minnesota.

I thank you again for the opportunity to support this legislation. While it will not solve this issue in its entirety, we believe it is a common-sense solution that will promote immediate investment to protect Minnesota's waters in an affordable way. We ask that you adopt this legislation.

Sincerely,

Sara Sietsema
Environmental Specialist
City of Willmar, MN