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February 21, 2022

The Honorable Carrie Ruud
Chair, Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance

Re: SF 2969 (Lang) Outdoor heritage fund appropriations.

Chair Ruud, Sen. Lang, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, thank you for the opportunity to express our support for [SF 2969 – Outdoor heritage fund appropriations](#).

MASWCD represents the state's 88 soil and water conservation districts, including their 440 elected supervisors and their more than 460 employees. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of the State established under Minnesota Statute Chapter 103C. Each SWCD is governed by a board of elected supervisors. And SWCD law is implemented across 100% of the state.

MASWCD supports the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's recommendations for annual appropriations of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as outlined in [SF 2969](#), which include funding for voluntary easement programs such as:

- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Grasslands Reserve;
- RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water;
- Wild Rice Shoreland Protection; and
- RIM Wetlands.

These easements programs, administered at the state level by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and implemented locally by SWCDs with interested landowners, have numerous benefits to wildlife habitat, water quality, water storage and retention, and climate resiliency on the landscape.

Thank you for your consideration. We strongly urge support for [SF 2969](#) and we thank Sen. Lang for carrying this bill.

Sincerely,

Sheila Vanney
Assistant Director
Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts