



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
MINNESOTA

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance Committee,

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Minnesota values the traditions, culture, and opportunities that wild spaces support. We work to protect and enrich wildlife and wild places that serve as the conduit to connect Minnesotans to their outdoor riches. We write to express our support for SF 2766, and to speak up for the wild places where these dollars will be put to work. The changes proposed will be returning revenue back to the outdoor heritage fund at a time when those resources are needed to support all types of outdoor recreation.

The last two years have seen tremendous increases in the use of our public lands and waters. This legislation not only supports hunting and angling lands, it also increases funding for both metropolitan and greater Minnesota parks and trails offering undeveloped spaces for all Minnesotans to connect to the outdoors.

Like most of North America, Minnesota's landscapes are now dominated by development. Our public lands are some of the last places to find valuable yet rare ecosystems—and they are supported by these dollars. From the water filtering capacities of our wetlands to the rare birds nesting in prairie remnants, we must continue to acquire, protect, restore, and manage our wild spaces. This funding will go a long way in the fight to retain places on our landscape where public lands, waters, and wildlife can serve Minnesotans.

Our Department of Natural resources is constantly falling behind in the fight to maintain our natural assets. With 87% of these dollars directed to field operations, these funds are already set up to be applied where they can make the greatest difference for public land users. We'd like to see the full 87% or more of these funds go to filling open field staff positions, conducting habitat management efforts that have been back-burnered, and ensuring that when Minnesotans tread into their public lands they are walking into high-quality habitats rich with wildlife.

Our support for SF 2766 is rooted in the hope that these dollars will help to ensure high quality outdoor recreation is available to every Minnesotan, and that our wild places will continue to thrive with proper support.

Sincerely,

Mike Verhoeven
Policy Committee
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Minnesota

