



March 8, 2022

Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen
Chair
Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee
3207 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Ingebrigtsen:

There are many facets to implementing water storage projects from concept to construction. One area that can cause significant delays is permitting. When delays occur, overall project costs can increase exponentially due to inflation and related factors. Therefore, the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) is supportive at this time of state assumption of the federal 404 Program based on the premise that assumption will:

- Improve permitting timelines as a result of decreased regulatory redundancy, streamlined processes, and administration by more responsive regulatory authorities (State\Local vs. Federal).
- Reduce costs for permit applicants resulting from more efficient and timely processes.
- Improve resource management and regulatory consistency through seamless integration with other state programs and availability of local expertise.

We understand that Minnesota progress to date toward potential 404 Assumption includes several milestones. We are also aware that the estimated cost to date to prepare the following reports is \$363,289:

- \$175,000 – MN Federal Clean Water Act Section 404 Assumption Report on Funding Estimates 2022.
- \$49,000 – Analysis of Retained and Assumable Waters in MN Report to Legislature 2018.
- \$139,289 – Feasibility Study Report to Legislature 2017.

We anticipate that this investment into achieving these milestones will ultimately result in state assumption that reduces regulatory burdens for our watershed districts that are developing water storage projects, which is a priority of the State of Minnesota. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written remarks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Sip".

Robert L. Sip
Executive Director, RRWMB