

**City of Hinckley**  
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January 11, 2019

Representative Jason Rarick  
431 State Office Bldg.  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Grindstone River Dam

Dear Representative Jason Rarick,

The City of Hinckley would like to express our frustration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and their process surrounding the evaluation and eventual plan to remove Grindstone River within the Hinckley Aquatic Management Area (AMA). Discussion regarding the future of the Dam has been ongoing since the DNR first informed the City of its intention to remove the Dam in August of 2017. At their open house on September 26, 2017, the DNR said that a decision about the dam would be made over the winter. This spring we were informed that the decision had been pushed back to sometime this summer. It was not until November 26, 2018, fourteen months after their open house, that the City received word from the local Fisheries Office that the DNR had made the decision to remove the Grindstone River Dam.

After the local DNR Fisheries office informed the City of the DNR's decision to remove the dam a meeting was set up with the City to discuss the Dam's removal further. Five DNR employees met with City staff on December 5, 2018 to inform the City that they had no further details regarding the Dam's removal, but they intended to hold an open house on Thursday, December 20, 2018 to inform the public of their decision. The information provided at the open house was not much better. There is no timetable for Dam's removal only that it must be done by June of 2020 when funding expires. They did not have a model of what structure would replace the dam, and there was no apparent plan for the area upriver of the Dam that would be exposed by the lower water level. To deliver what amounted to a five slide power point presentation worth of information the DNR brought between ten and twelve employees. The amount of time and personnel present at the two meetings called by the DNR in December is excessive when you consider the lack of information available for the public.

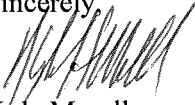
One of the original reasons given to support removal of the dam was to allow the free flow of fish up the Grindstone River into Grindstone Lake. While this goal is admirable, it makes little sense as there is another dam five to ten miles up the river that would prevent fish from ever reaching the lake. Why

spend money removing Grindstone River Dam in Hinckley if one of the goals of removal cannot be accomplished due to the presence of another dam that is not going to be removed?

The City appreciates the DNR's commitment to involving the City and the Community in this process. The amount of time taken and the number of employees involved in the December meetings, and the overall process used to decide to remove the Dam, is a waste of time and resources. The City and Community waited fourteen months for a decision that we were told was going to take no more than six. Once a decision was finally made a meeting was held that offered no relevant new information, no finalized design of the new river configuration and no timetable for removal and restoration. What was the DNR doing for those fourteen months? The City respects the DNR's right to manage their land as best they see fit. We are simply concerned over the apparent waste of time and resources used in making their decisions.

The City of Hinckley thanks you for your time and continued support.

Sincerely,



Kyle Morell  
City Administrator/Clerk  
City of Hinckley

CC: Hinckley City Council  
Governor Tim Walz  
Representative Jason Rarick  
Senator Tony Lourey  
Commissioner of the MN Department of Natural Resources  
Regional Director of the MN Department of Natural Resources  
Mille Lacs Band Commissioner of Natural Resources