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Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy

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Past House Members

Representative John Poston, Co-Chair
Representative Patty Acomb
Representative Peter Fischer
Representative Josh Heintzeman
Representative Todd Lippert
Representative Paul Torkelson

Past Senate Members

Senator Chris Eaton, Co-Chair
Senator Rich Draheim
Senator Kent Eken
Senator Michael Goggin
Senator Bill Weber
Senator Charles Wiger

February 20, 2023

Chair Hawj and Members,

For the record, I am Jim Stark, Director of the Subcommittee on Water Policy. SF 1608 is one of several bills that have resulted from the subcommittee's stakeholder process over the summer. That process involved hearing and prioritizing over 50 issues relating to water management and water policy. The Subcommittee consists of 12 members, 6 from each of the bodies, equally split between the parties. It has been my good fortune to have Senator Weber as a member during the four years I have been with the subcommittee, and to have him as a co-chair.

SF 1608 involves a simple change to the water law in Chapter 103D. Currently, the law includes an ad valorem tax levy, of 0.048 percent of the estimated market value, or \$250,000, whichever is less. This ceiling has been in place for many years. Inflation has greatly reduced the value of the levy. The ceiling limits the ability of Watershed Districts to implement watershed plans and to plan and implement the one-watershed/one plan process. The ceiling applies only to Watershed Districts in greater Minnesota, and not to Metro Watershed Districts.

The requested change would raise the ceiling from \$250,000 to \$500,000.

Mr. Bohn, representing the Association of Watershed Districts, is here to further explain the history and details about the bill.

Respectfully,

Jim Stark