



Association of Minnesota Counties

125 Charles Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55103-2108 | www.mncounties.org

March 22, 2023

Re: S.F. 2438 (Hawj) Environment and Natural Resources Appropriations

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is a membership-based organization representing all 87 Minnesota counties. **We appreciate the opportunity to address a few provisions included in governor's environmental budget proposal (SF2438).**

While AMC is supportive of numerous provisions in this legislation, we want to call your attention to a few items of particular importance to Minnesota counties:

- **County Feedlot Program** (lines 16.1-16.7): Counties with delegated authority serve an important local connection for livestock producers in implementing important water quality measures. Funding for the county feedlot program was reduced during past budget deficits of the early 2000's and has been flat for more than a decade. However, the work included in county delegation agreements has continued to increase as has the cost to deliver these services. The appropriation in the bill (\$2.959 million) represents a much-needed increase for this base funding that also requires county matching funds. ***Senator Putnam's SF748 is the county request for this program at \$3 million each year.***
- **Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Program** (lines 8.11-8.26): 86 of Minnesota's 87 counties administer subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) programs. In 2021, local governments reported over 630,000 systems across Minnesota, representing an estimated 43.1 billion gallons of SSTS treated wastewater. ***Local governments invest significant local funds to operate these programs and counties support the increased state funding for this important water quality work.***
- **Natural Resources Block Grants** (lines 37.3-37.17): The Natural Resources Block Grants provide state support for certain environmental functions required of county governments by the state of Minnesota, including the Wetland Conservation Act, shoreland protection and local water management. The block grant was intended to support this work as a state and local partnership but, unfortunately, state investment in the block grant has lagged and counties cover most of these costs. ***Minnesota counties appreciate the increase included in the Natural Resources Block Grants line-item.***

AMC is supportive of additional provisions throughout SF2438 and looks forward to working with the committee on its omnibus budget proposal. ***We ask that you support the increases for these environmental protection programs that counties administer on behalf of the state.***

Sincerely,



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